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The layman looks at the  
minister





*The Layman Looks at the Minister*



# THE *Layman* LOOKS AT THE *Minister*

By

MURRAY H. LEIFFER



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## THE LAYMAN LOOKS AT THE MINISTER

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO  
*My Mother and Father*

Devoted Christian laymen  
for threescore years and ten



## *Foreword*

THE average man in the church, as in the nation, frequently feels that he is lost sight of. The opinions of the great and of the notable are quoted in the press and from the pulpit. But what of "the common man"—a term which includes nearly all of us?

The opinion poll is a device recently developed to discover what the average men and women, who furnish the strength and do the work of the nation, think on important issues. Two values are to be derived from such poll taking: the first and most obvious is the discovery of the attitudes of representative citizens; the second and more subtle is to give not only these representatives but also other millions, who are heard through them, a sense of significance and participation.

H heretofore there has been no large-scale effort to discover what lay men and women think concerning the church or the ministry. The present study, using the opinion-poll technique, was initiated in the hope of answering several questions: Do members of the Methodist Church in different parts of the country hold similar attitudes toward

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the clergy? Can pastors as the result of such an opinion poll discover some suggestions and cues which will permit them to increase the effectiveness of their own service? What influence should these opinions have on the selection and training of men for the ministry?

This procedure does not assume that a norm, in accordance with which ministers *must* be selected and trained, will be established by polling lay people. Laymen agree that it is not the business of the preacher to please the parishioner, but to speak the Word of God as he, in good conscience and after diligent study, has discovered it. Nevertheless, it is helpful for a clergyman to know what men and women throughout the church think concerning the many aspects of his professional service as preacher and pastor.

Anyone who had the privilege of receiving and reading the correspondence involved in this study would certainly be impressed with the good common sense and spiritual insight of Methodist men and women. Their pride in the church and their esteem for the ministry, as well as their friendly concern, would warm the heart of all who work and pray for a more Christian world. To these lay participants the director of the study wishes to extend his deep appreciation.

Thanks are also due to a number of other per-

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sons. Several seminary students, particularly Lawrence Guderian and Bryant Howard, gave much time in the early stages of the project. Howard Ellis has prepared with skill the illustrations which enliven the text. Grateful acknowledgment is made to Bishop J. Ralph Magee; George L. Morelock, executive secretary of the Board of Lay Activities; Henry V. Loeppert, Rock River Conference lay leader; and William K. Anderson, educational director of the Commission on Ministerial Training, all of whom gave assistance in preparing the questionnaire and also perused and helpfully criticized the manuscript.

I am particularly indebted to Harris Franklin Rall, my teacher, colleague, and friend for many years, who read with care the entire manuscript and made many valuable suggestions.

MURRAY H. LEIFFER



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## CHAPTER I

### *The Layman Looks at the Minister*

THIS is the story of what laymen think about ministers. What do they expect of their preacher in matters of dress and demeanor? How do they respond to his sermon subjects and preaching habits? How prophetic do laymen expect him to be on social issues? These and many other subjects are dealt with. While the study is concerned particularly with attitudes expressed by members of the Methodist fellowship, these

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are probably typical of American Protestantism.

Eighty-two out of every thousand men, women, and youth over fifteen years of age in the United States are members of the Methodist Church. They constitute the largest Protestant denomination in the country. The 8,300,000 lay members and 24,000 ministers together share the responsibility for the ongoing work of the church. These people, living in every county of the United States, come from all economic and social classes. What they think on religious and social problems is of great importance to the church and to our nation.

### **Understanding Between Laymen and Minister**

This study—the first of a series—deals with the attitudes of church members toward the man who stands in their pulpit Sunday after Sunday; who is a leader in the community, and yet is inevitably somewhat detached from it; who attempts to voice the eternal Word of God but sometimes, like Paul, must admit: “I have no command of the Lord to give you, but I will give you my opinion as that of one on whom through the Lord’s mercy you can depend.”

The minister frequently is taken for granted—  
✓ thought of as a function rather than a whole personality by the laymen in the church which he

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serves. On the other hand, many a preacher feels at times that he could get much more accomplished if it were not for the men and women who are continually calling him from his study, seeking to temper his prophetic zeal, or presuming to tell him how the worship services should be conducted.

A Methodist insurance broker from Idaho suggested:

No doubt, the ideal lay group and the ideal minister haven't met. But when an awakened laity gets serious about its future ministry, you will find promising applicants knocking at the seminary doors in numbers unheard of before. The laity is waiting to be awakened. By whom?

Unfortunately, but perhaps inevitably, laymen and ministers tend to be separated into two distinct classes, each of which is sometimes only casually aware of the role which the other performs in organized religion. Each at times thinks of itself as the church, viewing the other as necessary but secondary. As an official in one denomination remarked, when discussing the need for more missionary funds: "We have plenty of excellent literature published by our various boards. If we could just get the laymen to read it, we would have no trouble in raising the money." When asked whether laymen had been consulted

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about the objectives of the missionary program, or in the preparation of the literature designed for them, he raised his eyebrows in surprise at the question. Yet how can the vast and significant enterprises of the church succeed if there is not understanding and close co-operation between ministers and laity?

The minister is one of the most public of personalities. Not only his parishioners but others in the local community know him by sight, watch his behavior in public, discuss his sermons and other utterances, conjecture as to his attitudes and intentions, and occasionally enjoy a bit of gossip at his expense.

And yet the minister is in some ways a protected person. Laymen are reluctant to criticize to his face his personal habits, his preaching manner, or even his method of conducting the business affairs of the church. As an Iowa housewife put it, "Most small towns do *a lot of tolerating* with their ministers." Unhappily, lay irritation with the behavior of a minister may simply fester under the surface or be given indirect expression through criticism of his wife or of his children's conduct.

If the situation becomes intolerable, instead of voicing specifically the reasons for their discontent, lay people, offering a generalized statement

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of their complaints, are likely to approach the superintendent or bishop with a request for a change of pastors. As in the case of civil divorce, it is often deemed more convenient and "polite" to avoid mentioning the real cause of tension. If there is fundamental criticism of a minister, it eventually finds expression, though perhaps silently, through declining interest in the work of the church, the rising number of inactive members, or the mounting indifference of youth to the religious leadership provided.

To be effective in his work the minister must understand not only the gospel which he is to preach, but also the attitudes and expectations of the men and women in his church. He must recognize that some of their most important reactions concerning him may only rarely come to his attention. Honest criticism and sincere difference of opinion he must neither fear nor flee.

Christian ministers and laymen alike are basically considerate and kindly in their judgments. Misunderstanding or conflict between them usually arises because they fail to comprehend each other's point of view, often on inconsequential details. One minister, the successful pastor of a large church, has made it a practice through the years to request three of his most discerning lay-

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men to serve as an informal committee, meeting with him periodically to make suggestions concerning his preaching and pastoral service.

### Qualities the Laymen Want

The laymen themselves are among the first to say that Christian truth cannot be established by majority vote. Though they wish their attitudes to be given consideration, they do not expect the eternal message of the Christian faith to be shaped to fit their own desires. "For the most part," commented the principal of a large Indiana public school, "we Methodists like our ministers to challenge our living and thinking, whether we agree with them or not."

What does the layman expect of a minister? Does he have a clear conception as to the type of personality which he finds most attractive? What are his notions about the conduct of the worship service? How tolerant is he of differences in opinion? How much of a consensus is there in the thinking of laymen concerning the ministry? Are there significant differences in the attitudes of men and women? Of youth and adults? Of urban and rural dwellers? It is to answer questions such as these and to promote mutual understanding between laymen and pastor that this opinion survey has been undertaken.

## Gathering the Opinions of Laymen

On the assumption that it is vital for ministers to know the minds of laymen concerning their profession, it was decided to sample the opinions of men and women across the church on this one central point: What are the traits that make for effectiveness or ineffectiveness in the ministry? With the help of many laymen, as well as pastors, superintendents, and bishops, a series of questions and problem situations<sup>1</sup> was worked out and sent to a representative sample of church members with the request that they express their judgment concerning them.

Every district and associate district lay leader<sup>2</sup> in the Methodist Church was invited to fill out the questionnaire. Since, except for a small minority, these lay leaders are men, a supplemental sample was made of the opinions of a representative group of women. As most of these



<sup>1</sup> The questions will be found in the Appendix. The distribution of responses—favorable, indifferent, unfavorable—and also the average scores by participating groups are shown.

<sup>2</sup> The district and associate district lay leaders are laymen who are elected annually to give direction to lay activities in the several—usually between 50 and 100—churches of the district. The Methodist Church has 564 districts within the United States.

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men and women are in their middle or later years, two additional samples were secured from young people under twenty-five years of age: the first, youth nominated by the district lay leaders; the second, the young men and women who make up the Methodist Youth Council. Each of these samples covered rural and urban areas in the various sections of the country. Over one thousand replies were received. Several score of these were composite judgments, worked out in adult church-school classes or in discussion groups. Approximately fifteen hundred people were represented in the total response.

A railway clerk from Pennsylvania, a grocer from Kansas, a housewife from Virginia, a school teacher from Ohio, a college student in Wisconsin, a bank clerk from Texas, a doctor in the Navy Medical Corps in Connecticut, a judge from Georgia, a business woman from California—these are some of the hundreds who replied to the inquiries. Many lengthy letters of interpretation were received. Numerous were the expressions of appreciation for the opportunity of participating.

### **Agreement of Laymen in Opinions**

These people are all active members of the church, vitally interested in its welfare and ready

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to devote time to its service. There is good reason to assume that the attitudes which they expressed are typical of the wider membership. This representative character is demonstrated by the internal consistency of the data. In fact, one of the most surprising aspects of the study has been the extent to which Methodists, whether they live in the North or the South, in rural areas or cities, whether they are men or women, young or old, think alike on important matters concerning the ministry and the work of the church.

This does not mean that all Methodists are in agreement in every detail, but that the consensus of opinion among the laymen in New England is very similar to that of the laymen of Texas; and when taken as a group the young people of the north central states have attitudes markedly similar to those of the youth in the South. It is true that there are a few interesting exceptions. Attention will be called to these when specific topics are discussed. The findings of this opinion survey indicate that Methodists are more unified in spirit and expectation than has generally been assumed. This in itself is decidedly encouraging and is evidence that the judgments of these lay people concerning the ministry are deserving of serious, thoughtful consideration by pastors and superintendents and by theological schools, which

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are training the religious leaders of the future.

The chapters which follow not only throw light on the attitudes of lay people toward the preacher but also reveal much concerning the past work of the ministry itself. The views of the laymen undoubtedly reflect the preaching to which they have been exposed and the experiences they have had at the hands of ministers.

Certain other generalizations may be mentioned. Methodists are community-minded and expect their ministers to be. They demonstrate marked tolerance in their views. They are, in general, to be classed as socially liberal when issues of the day are under discussion. And, last but not least, they have a high ideal for the ministry and expect their pastor to be aggressive in his leadership and proud of his calling.

### Methods Used in the Study

A few words concerning the scoring and presentation of the answers are in order. Seventy-one questions—some more significant than others—relating to the minister and his work were asked. An excerpt from a typical return, showing the first four questions, the columns in which answers could be given, and the response of one of the laymen, is reproduced on the opposite page.

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A numerical value was given each answer according to the column in which it was checked.

### CHECK EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN ONE OF THE FIVE COLUMNS:

HOW ACCEPTABLE WILL A MINISTER BE IN YOUR CHURCH:	We very much de- sire this in our minister	Desir- able but not neces- sary	Not im- portant one way or the other	Unde- sirable but would not dis- qualify	This would dis- qualify
if he co-operates with ministers of other denominations in Thanksgiving and pre-Easter services?	X				
if he directs church and community rec- reation?		X			
if he devotes the major portion of his time to preparing sermons?				X	
if he is hesitant and bashful in meeting people?					X

Favorable answers—columns 1 and 2—were assigned plus values, and unfavorable responses—columns 4 and 5—minus values. An indifferent response, represented by column 3, was assigned a zero value. The numerical value assigned each column is as follows:

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COLUMN		VALUE
1	"We very much desire this in our minister"	10
2	"Desirable but not necessary"	5
3	"Not important one way or the other"	0
4	"Undesirable but would not disqualify"	— 5
5	"This would disqualify"	— 10

A single summary score for any particular question could then be obtained by averaging the assigned values for all of the responses. This score is useful in indicating the extent to which a ministerial trait is regarded as desirable or undesirable by the whole group. Although a maximum score is never attained because many people are middle-of-the-roaders and fairly consistently avoid columns 1 and 5, the nearer the score approaches +10, the more essential a trait is considered. Conversely, a score of —5 indicates much greater opposition than a score of —2.

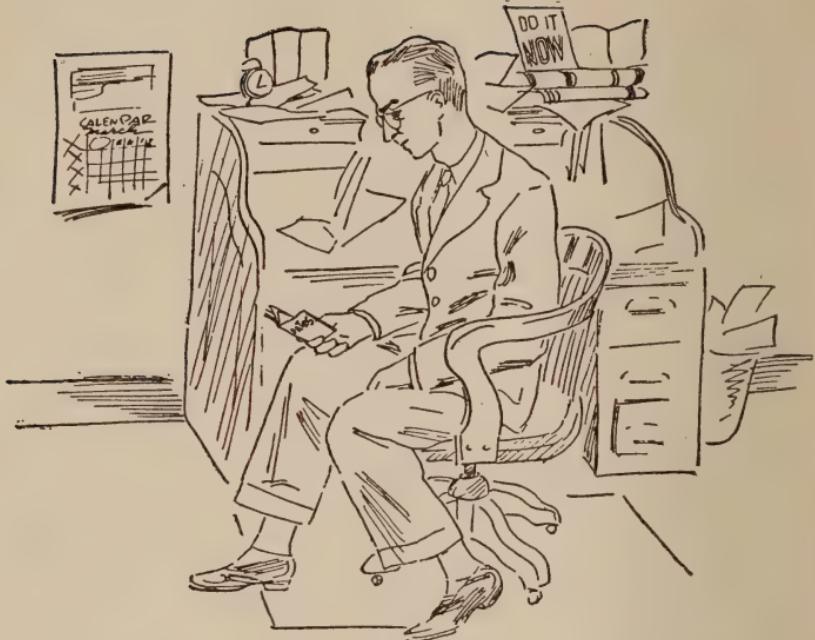
Many laymen, not wishing to be extreme in their criticism, checked all objectionable traits in column 4. As one of them, a woman from Texas, specified: "I have marked many of the undesirable qualities as 'undesirable but would not disqualify.' If a preacher had very many of these qualities, they would in my opinion disqualify

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him, but one or two would not." In similar vein an oil jobber in Kentucky stated, "I have checked the last column very seldom, but if there were three or four instances in column 4 relating to one minister, a man would be disqualified." A young woman from New England and a layman from Philadelphia wrote similarly: "The responses of the people of our section are tempered; but, while they would not react violently and abruptly against certain deficiencies, the cumulative effect, either from a time standpoint or by reason of too many shortcomings, must be considered." Therefore, a composite negative score of -3 or -4 indicates a factor which would constitute a serious handicap for any minister.

Another method of summarizing the responses, the use of percentages, is also employed in the chapters which follow. This shows the proportion of all those replying who favor, or disapprove, a trait. It involves combining the replies in columns 1 and 2, or 4 and 5, and disregards the intensity of feeling concerning the trait.

A complete record of percentages on each question and summary scores for each of the four groups sampled will be found in the Appendix.



## CHAPTER II

### *The Minister's Conception of His Task*

THE way a man thinks about his job has much to do with his success in it. This is as true of a minister as it is of a teacher, a farmer, or a postal clerk. If his work is for him a pleasure—something he would enjoy doing even though he were not paid for it—he is more effective and is spared the inner conflicts that harass the discontented man. On the other hand, if he dislikes his work or feels uncomfortable and embarrassed in its perform-

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ance, he is a misfit and his associates will soon become aware of the fact.

The ministry is unique among the professions in one respect. Those who enter it are assumed to have a sense of mission, of divine call, to preach the Christian gospel and to minister to the spiritual needs of men. This does not mean that there is equal conviction and dedication or, for that matter, emotional maturity in all candidates for religious work. Since they come from farm and city, from homes of wealth and homes of poverty, from happy and unhappy families, there is inevitable diversity in personality and aptitude. But with the passage of the years and the accompanying testing of their faith, through experience in preaching and in pastoral service, they tend to have a growing appreciation of the significance of their work. This experience is parallel to that of the young couple who at marriage think they could not possibly love each other more than now, but who will find deeper meaning in the relationship as they grow older together, sharing joys and sorrows. Though, regrettably, some preachers have a waning appreciation of their work as time goes by, this is not typical. Ministers, like doctors, normally advance in skill, insight, and commitment as the years pass.

It is significant that in no other profession does

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so large a proportion of sons enter their father's occupation as in the ministry. This is evidence of the high conception which pastors generally have of their calling.

A logical place to begin in the study of attitudes of laymen toward ministers is at this point: How should the minister think of his work? How does it affect his service in the community if he is apologetic for his calling or if he himself seems to have little faith in the gospel he preaches?

### **Apologetic Attitude**

The laymen of the Methodist Church feel keenly on this question, as is shown by their response to the query: "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he is apologetic for being a minister?" Only two of the participants in the study regarded this as a matter of indifference, while 98 per cent expressed strong disapproval. Men and women in all sections of the country, rural as well as urban, were alike in their peremptory rejection of any minister who lacked a sense of the significance of his work or commitment to it. The young people were as definite in their disapproval as were the adults. The scores for all groups fell within the narrow range of -8.5 to -9.0.

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Clearly any man who is apologetic, or tries to hide his membership in the ministerial profession, or is embarrassed by being identified with it, is by that fact disqualified as a religious leader, in the minds of the Methodist people. What the laity desires in a pastor is, in the words of a Des Moines merchant, "a clean-cut personality, happy in his service of the Lord. . . ."

### Pessimism or Negative Religion

Very similar is the attitude toward a minister who in his preaching "seems pessimistic and defeatist concerning the achievement of the goals of the Christian church." Here, again, 98 per cent of the laymen lined up to vote against pessimism in a minister. Negative religion presented by a man unsure of himself and his message will obviously meet with a strong negative response from the people. This does not mean that Methodist men and women desire a Pollyanna religion or preacher. They wish evil condemned, and forthrightly. But they expect their religious leader to have a fundamental trust in God, a belief that good eventually will triumph, and a consequent assurance and patience even in the face of disappointing conditions.

A loyal Chicago churchwoman lamented the

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fact that she and others in the congregation had difficulty in keeping their pastor from becoming discouraged in his labors. Is this a case of the sheep needing to feed the shepherd? An insurance man from New York State remarked whimsically, on the basis of his own church's experience with a minister, that it is necessary to "pray for him and help him. If his church has no religion, he might get discouraged."

Lay people look expectantly to the supervising officers of the church, superintendents and bishops, to screen out this minority of apologetic, pessimistic ministers who, because of their negative conception of the gospel, fail to give inspiration or leadership.

### **Effectiveness in Winning Decisions for Christ**

Almost as significant as the attitude of a minister toward his profession and his message, and inseparably related to it, is his ability to make the Christian way of life attractive to people. Four questions in the study have direct bearing on this aspect of a minister's work. Two of these deal with his success in bringing individuals into the Christian fellowship: "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he is not effective in winning decisions for Christ?" and "How acceptable . . .

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if he fails to train classes for church membership?"<sup>1</sup> Laymen, eighty-eight per cent of them, reject ministers who fail to win people to Christ, over half checking the extreme column 5—"This would disqualify." This attitude, so dominant and so general among those sharing in the study, indicates that laymen will not hold ministers guiltless if they fail to reach the unchurched.

On the second question, "How acceptable . . . if he fails to train classes for church membership?" the response was almost identical, with 88 per cent unfavorable, although somewhat fewer checked column 5. The opposition to a minister who neglects this aspect of his work would be even more marked except for two facts: Laymen in some of the larger churches stated that this was not the function of the pastor but of others on the staff. Again, some did not realize what was involved in conducting training classes or the minister's responsibility for it, as provided in the Methodist Discipline.

<sup>1</sup> Both of these questions and numerous others were phrased negatively to encourage the participant to exercise more discrimination in his responses. If the question had been stated affirmatively, practically all laymen, recognizing the desirability of the trait, would have checked the question in column 1, indicating that they very much desired this in their minister. When stated negatively, however, there was opportunity to indicate the extent of objection to ministerial leadership lacking in these important respects.

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Lay leaders were somewhat less critical of ministers who failed in these two respects than were either the young people or the women; that is, more of them checked column 4—"undesirable but would not disqualify"—whereas the majority of the women and youth checked column 5—"this would disqualify." A few laymen actually said they approved of the minister who fails "in winning decisions for Christ," perhaps reflecting an unhappy experience of their own at the hands of an overzealous and unskilled leader. However, the dominant note was expressed by a housewife from Indiana, "It matters not how much education he has or how much training; he will fail if he is unable to lead people to Christ." It is because of this weakness in a few of our ministers, according to another layman, that "we are closing Methodist churches and selling the buildings to the smaller denominations, and they are making a success of it. Why? I think every sermon should be so prepared as to get a verdict."

### Evangelistic Meetings

Methodist people are of the opinion that services especially aimed to win men, women, and youth to Christ ought to be held. A man from New York wrote, "It is services of this type which made the Methodist Church." And a young uni-

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versity professor from Memphis declared: "I believe in a series of special evangelistic services held annually."

To test the attitudes of laymen on this point, two questions were included, calling for an expression of opinion concerning the holding of "evangelistic meetings"—a term which obviously had various connotations for different people: "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he *does* hold evangelistic meetings?" and "How acceptable . . . if he *does not* hold evangelistic meetings?"

The scores on these questions are of interest. Bear in mind that a plus score indicates approval. The nearer the plus score approaches 10, the greater the approval. Similarly a minus score registers disapproval. The average response of those in each of the four groups sampled showed ap-

Table I  
ATTITUDE OF FOUR GROUPS SAMPLED TOWARD  
HOLDING EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS

HOW ACCEPTABLE WILL A MINISTER BE	Average Group Score			
	Lay Leaders	Women	Youth Group	M.Y.C. Group
If he <b>does</b> hold evangelistic meetings?	+5.8	+6.0	+4.6	+3.2
If he <b>does not</b> hold evangelistic meet- ings?	-3.9	-4.3	-3.4	-1.9

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proval of the holding of some type of evangelistic meetings and disapproval, though less marked, of the failure to hold such services.

Lay leaders and women are in close agreement on this subject, with the women, as might be expected, feeling somewhat more intensely, whether on the positive or negative statement of the question. Young people, who have had less association with "protracted meetings" or special "revival services," naturally are more indifferent to the whole subject than are their elders. Even so, they favor evangelistic endeavor on the part of the pastor and consider it a handicap if he neglects this phase of his work. Youth and adults alike show opposition to the "shouting kind" of evangelism. As a woman from South Carolina remarked, "Educational services are desirable; highly emotional evangelism is not desirable."

This is the first topic on which there is a noticeable regional difference of opinion among Methodists. The laymen of the Southeastern Jurisdiction and the members of the Central Jurisdiction (Negro) place much more stress on evangelistic endeavors than do laymen throughout the North. Laymen of the South Central Jurisdiction stand midway between these two groups, whereas members of the Western Jurisdiction demonstrate little enthusiasm for this type of religious service.

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**Table II**

### ATTITUDE OF JURISDICTIONS OF METHODIST CHURCH TOWARD HOLDING EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS

Jurisdiction *	Acceptability of Minister	
	Who Does <b>Not</b> Hold Evangelistic Meetings	Who Does Hold Evangelistic Meetings
Northeastern	-2.9	+4.9
North Central	-2.6	+4.3
Southeastern	-5.6	+6.7
South Central	-3.6	+5.8
Central	-5.0	+7.5
Western	-0.7	+2.4

\* The Methodist Church in the United States is organized on the basis of six jurisdictions. These are territorially as follows:

Northeastern Jurisdiction—Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, West Virginia, Delaware, District of Columbia.

Southeastern Jurisdiction—Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi.

North Central Jurisdiction—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota.

South Central Jurisdiction—Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico.

Central Jurisdiction—includes all the churches in the Negro Annual Conferences. These, however, do not cover New England or the western portion of the U. S. In the latter areas Negro churches are included in the same annual conferences as Caucasian churches.

Western Jurisdiction—Washington, Idaho, Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado.

Though Methodist people as a whole wish a dynamic preaching effort on the part of their minister, which will result in conversion and the

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growth of Christian character, a sizable minority of them, as shown by their letters, are either confused by the term evangelism or find in it unpleasant connotations. It brings to mind the highly emotional, revivalistic patterns of earlier generations and therefore is rejected by many, especially of the youth. However, there is almost universal insistence on the minister's proclaiming the "glad tidings," which is the original meaning of evangelism. Obviously, if the essential content of the term is to have vital meaning in the next two decades, it will need to be revivified and given new and desirable connotations.

An excellent summation of the views of many laymen may be presented in the words of a postal clerk from Minnesota: "I think the pastor (not an evangelist brought in once a year for a two-week campaign) should preach evangelistic sermons at least once a week. Make Sunday-evening services evangelistic." The same writer added significantly: "Our real evangelistic efforts should be made by the laymen going out two by two, not for one day or one week, but continually."

A teacher from Oklahoma agreed:

If the laymen of the churches in Methodism could be brought to realize that church work does not consist wholly of raising funds for the budget, foreign missions, and so forth, but should, in a greater degree, consist of

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personal evangelism in their communities, there would be such a surge of power come to the church we would scarcely know what to do with it.

The work of winning the world for Christ is, according to church-minded lay people, not solely the prerogative or responsibility of ministers. The latter will be wise to recognize and to preach that church members should be first of all Christians and not primarily businessmen or housewives, and as Christians they have an obligation to spread the word.

### Facing Christian Issues

"How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he hesitates to take the initiative on Christian issues?" is another question relating to the minister's conception of his own task. This query deliberately did not define "Christian issues." Concerning this term there would be some difference of opinion. Nevertheless, once it is assumed that an issue has Christian implications, the laymen know where they stand. A preacher is a disappointment to them if he lacks conviction concerning those problems of his time which involve Christian ethics. Equally dissatisfied are they if, because he lacks initiative or courage, he is evasive when Christian issues are at stake. "Such

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a man should quit preaching and get another job," remarked an elderly insurance agent. Ninety-two per cent of those covered by the opinion poll expressed disapproval. The intensity of



the disapproval is shown by the high composite score of -7.0. The women feel even more keenly on the point (-7.5) than do the lay leaders (-6.4), presumably because a few of the men in business are afraid of injudicious pastoral comments on economic issues.

The consensus, in spite of a few dissident voices, is that the preacher should furnish leadership in dealing with the problems of ethical living. A woman from California specified: "We wish [our pastor] would be more *positive* on Christian issues and on evangelism." To be sure, a minister "must lead, not drive," for he has no right to compel acquiescence with his point of view. But the angels must weep when they hear the plaint of some lay people who earnestly but vainly look to the minister for leadership in dealing with social issues and find none.

### The Minister's Use of Time

One of the surest signs of an effective pastor is the wise use of the hours at his disposal. It is also a cue to his conception of his task. Few persons in the community have as complete control over their own schedule as does the minister. A common criticism voiced by laymen is that the preacher always seems to be free to help his wife with the housework or attend women's meetings or conferences—all of which is a little annoying to the men of the church who do not define such activities as part of the minister's primary responsibility.

Therefore, the responses of laymen to a number of questions—some stated positively, some negatively—bearing on this subject are illuminating. When asked, "How acceptable will a minister be . . . if he fails to spend adequate time in study?" over 90 per cent of the people of the pews indicated that inadequate study is a crippling handicap. It is time "in study" and not simply "*in the study*" which laymen are talking about and, as one remarked, "We expect to see some results from the time he spends there." One woman pointed out that for a few years a man may "get by" without study, but that "eventually this would disqualify him."

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Ministers should take cognizance of research on the performance of public-school teachers. It has been discovered that the average teacher increases in effectiveness for the first two or three years, then levels off for the next five years, after which time his work becomes less and less satisfactory. The chief reason for his failure to grow and for his early decline in teaching skills is lack of continued study. The same generalization may apply to ministers who fail to discipline themselves by regular, diligent, intellectual work.

John Wesley, troubled because some of his ministers did not study, included among the questions to be asked at annual conferences one on the subject of the use of time, together with some pungent remarks. These were subsequently incorporated in the first Discipline of the Methodist Church in 1784.

*Quest. 32. But why are we not more knowing?*

*Ans.* Because we are idle. We forget our very first rule, "Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary."

. . . (1.) Read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly. Steadily spend all the morning in this employ, or, at least, five hours in four and twenty.

"But I read only the Bible." Then you ought to teach others to read only the Bible, and, by parity of reason,

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to hear only the Bible: but if so, you need preach no more. . . . If you need no book but the Bible, you are got above St. Paul. He wanted others too. . . . "But I have no taste for reading." Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your trade.

Another side light on the preacher's work program is found in the answers to the question, "How acceptable will a minister be . . . if he spends a large part of his time doing repair work on the church buildings and caring for the grounds?" Laymen are not as much impressed with the minister's "busy work" about the church and parsonage as some pastors suppose. It is true, however, that many lay people, especially in rural areas, regard it as an asset in a minister if he can do small repair jobs about the buildings. A rural mail carrier wrote: ". . . if minor things go wrong, he should be able to meet the emergency. Far too many of our preachers are unable even to drive a nail or saw a board straight."

A woman from a southern village remarked:

He should be interested greatly in the church premises, even to the extent of doing manual labor there, if necessary. But no one would want to see the minister in working clothes puttering around the church like a janitor all the time. It is his business and responsibility to see that the janitor or church committees keep the lawn attractive and the building clean and premises neat.

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In the urban communities there is general objection to the minister's doing the repair work around the church. A woman correspondent stated, "This is the function of the janitor," while a Louisiana college student remarked that the minister's contribution should be in "the things of the spirit." The minister might as well realize that, to be polite, lay people often compliment him on his landscaping achievements while they secretly wish he would devote more time to study and sermon preparation.

Three out of five explicitly disapproved of a minister's spending a *large* portion of his time in such a way. Very few people marked the question in either extreme column; the aggregate score shows a definite, but not violent, disapproval (-2.7). There was less objection on the part of the young people than of the adults.

Questions concerning the use of time in sermon preparation and in young people's work are discussed in later chapters.

### Part-Time Jobs for Ministers

Is it agreeable with parishioners if their minister "takes part-time jobs on the side for pay"? Evidently the answer is "no." With almost complete unanimity (89 per cent) lay people, whether

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young or old, think it undesirable for a pastor to try to hold down a secondary job. "Pay him a living salary." Lay people regard the minister's task as so significant that he should devote his full time to it. The evidence supporting this contention is a score of -7.2. Over half of the participants think that the holding of an additional part-time position for pay disqualifies a minister for his important work; most of the remainder consider it a distinct handicap. This judgment has important implications for laymen themselves. They in the long run are responsible for the development of adequate ministerial salaries, thereby making possible full-time service.

While they feel less keenly about it, parishioners also register a strong opposition (-4.7) when the minister's wife works for pay in the community. Women object most sharply (-5.2); youth object least, but still definitely (-3.2).

The Methodists who participated in this study have a clear, coherent notion of the attitude which they think the minister should take toward his work. Even though they may not be thoroughly consistent in their own beliefs and practices and at times resent the minister's "preaching at them," nevertheless they strongly desire him to have a sense of mission, a pride in his calling, a readiness

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to take the initiative and carry the banner boldly on behalf of what they regard as important Christian principles, a gladness in the service of his people, a willingness to work diligently to reach the unreached.



## CHAPTER III

### *The Minister as Preacher*

THE most important function within the church, and the one which is never duplicated by any other agency within the community, is the conduct of worship services and the proclaiming of the Word of God. In Protestantism the sermon not only occupies half or more of the time in such services but also has been accorded the central position, all other aspects focusing on it. It is not by accident, therefore, that the terms "minister" and "preacher" have been for practical purposes interchangeable.

In the minds of many laymen a minister is paid

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to preach; only incidentally does he perform the many other churchly functions. And it is not laymen alone who have such a notion. Ministers themselves rate one another more frequently in terms of preaching skills than on the performance of pastoral duties. In seeking to discover the attitudes of laymen a number of questions relating to preaching and the conduct of the worship service were introduced.

### Sermon Preparation

If a congregation is to experience communion with God and to gain deep insights into the nature of man, his needs, and his world, much work must be done before the organist plays the prelude. Only indirectly do most laymen have any indication of the hours of study and prayer which have entered into the preparation for the service. Ministers sometimes wonder whether laymen do realize the time-consuming effort which must precede the development of an inspiring sermon. For this reason the response to the question, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he devotes the major portion of his time to preparing sermons?" has proved illuminating.<sup>1</sup> Sixty per cent

<sup>1</sup> A similar question, "How acceptable will a minister be . . . if he spends the major portion of his time and interest in the young people's program?" was asked in a different section of the question-

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indicated that this was a desirable emphasis for a minister to make, 10 per cent were indifferent, while 30 per cent dissented. Women stressed the importance of study and sermon preparation (+3.8); youth seemed to regard it with indifference (+0.5). The responses to this question must be considered in the light of the strong lay condemnation of a minister who "fails to spend adequate time in study." The composite score on this question (discussed on p. 39 ff.) was -6.6.

Concerning the importance of sermon preparation, a woman sensibly remarked, "Ample time should be allowed, but not necessarily the major time." Others think "he should not devote an excessive amount of time to his study," and he might properly spend "a portion of each day but not a major portion of his time." A high-school vocational counselor from Louisiana added judiciously, "Time enough to be well prepared, thought provoking, and spiritually helpful."

Not a few laymen are obviously dissatisfied with the poor study habits of their ministers. In the words of a teacher of mature years: "This [adequate time in study] is very important. Most minnaire. It was hoped that, by using the expression "*the* major portion," the relative significance of each of these two types of work, in the thought of the laymen, would be revealed. However, since a number evidently read each question as "*a* major portion," interpretation is somewhat difficult. (Or else laymen optimistically thought a minister could devote several "major" portions of time.)

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isters are too content to ‘coast,’ doing routine preaching. The message should be characterized by being spiritual and scholarly—the result of real study and meditation.”

The clerk of an Oklahoma county makes a slightly different approach to the subject:

Most preachers, and naturally Methodist preachers that I listen to, talk too much about what they have done, or make too many personal references, follow notes too closely, giving the average thinking layman the impression of not enough time spent praying over the message to be delivered to *hungry people*.

Seventy-five per cent or more, instead of offering a warm and genuinely sincere prayer for their congregation, tell God what is going on, preach to the people, quote poetry, and wind up by rattling off the Lord’s Prayer, instead of *praying* the Lord’s Prayer. This again gives the impression of too little soul burden—not enough time spent in quiet, thoughtful meditation just prior to the service and throughout the past few days.

Poor sermons may result from insufficient mental effort, hasty superficiality, undue reliance on quoted materials, or the absence of any feeling of spiritual urgency. Whatever the cause, poor sermons are more painful to the listeners than offending ministers realize. A barber from Texas said:

I find this fault among the Methodist ministers. They don’t seem to be able to stand up and preach without having to read the sermon. Some will bring a load of

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books and magazines to the pulpit and read portions. A sermon is much more effective if they do not read it.

Although penetrating and, occasionally, caustic remarks were written by some laymen, it is evident that many of their fellows do not realize the importance of careful, systematic study as a foundation for vital preaching. One cannot help asking, "Is this due in part to the kind of sermons which they have heard and which they have, therefore, accepted as a norm?" Perhaps, if laymen had been hearing better and more profound preaching over the years they would more generally recognize the essentiality of study, meditation, and prayer in sermon preparation.

### The Bible in Preaching

Let us grant the significance of the sermon in the worship service and assume that much time should enter into its preparation. But what should the minister talk about? Only three of the questions bearing on this general problem are discussed in the present chapter. Other aspects appear later, particularly in Chapter VII. The first question, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he does not 'preach from the Bible?'" was phrased negatively in order to bring out the extent to which laymen regard biblical

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preaching as essential. Though there were undoubtedly some differences in interpreting the question, it does focus attention on the use of the Bible, if not in expository preaching, at least in furnishing a text, a viewpoint, and illustrative material. As one woman expressed it, "The minister would certainly have to base his message on God's Word."

Speaking for rural people, a teacher in a southern agricultural college wrote:

Our churches in the larger cities may like a sermon, polished to the nth degree, dealing with theology and rhetorically correct. The memberships of the smaller churches do not care one whit for such. They want the gospel of Jesus Christ, with the Bible opened on the pulpit and the message brought from it.

It is very patent that Methodists think of the Bible as essential in Christian preaching. Four



out of five objected to the omission of biblical references from the sermon. The average score of -6.4 demonstrates the strong opposition felt by laymen to the

"Sunday lecture" which neither rises out of biblical teaching nor aims to produce Christian conviction. "We like well-prepared, well-pre-

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sented sermons, mostly biblical in nature. We can hear book reviews and lectures on current topics elsewhere. I think we want spiritual values more emphasized in church."

Even the youth, who are less insistent than adults on the use of the Bible, object strongly to its omission (-4.1). The score for lay leaders is -6.2; the responses of women show even greater concern (-7.3). While there is desire for biblical preaching throughout the whole of Methodism, the greatest emphasis on it is in the South.

Methodists do not, apparently, expect the Bible to be used in a literalistic, narrowly authoritarian manner. A particularly interesting statement of lay attitudes came from a woman in middle years, a teacher in a southern high school:

I want my minister to know his Bible, to recognize it as the best textbook for human living in existence. I want him to recognize that the Bible as it exists today is the best interpretation and the best selection of religious writings, but I don't want him to expect me to accept all those writings literally.

Neither do Methodists desire preaching to be divorced from contemporary life. A manufacturer from Ohio commented: "If 'preaching from the Bible' suggests an exposition of the Bible to the exclusion of any social applications of Christianity, our answer would be one way, while a

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broader interpretation of the same question would bring a different answer." The laity hope that the minister will relate the Bible to life. "Often a sermon more down to earth, practical, associated with everyday experiences, would be of greater help than the more or less intellectual discussion of a text," wrote a young man in the Navy.

### Difference in Theological Views

Like all other humans, the laymen of the Methodist Church are more comfortable when their associates agree with them. Specifically, they hope that their minister will concur with them on what they consider essentials of belief. To expect otherwise would be to ask for the unnatural. In response to the question, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he holds theological views which are in disagreement with those of the people in the church?" the adults replied with a score of —5.2 and youth with a score of —3.9. Three out of four regarded theological differences as undesirable. It is rather surprising that the opposition was not even greater.

Many who indicated, by checking this question in column 4 or 5, that they desired the minister to be in agreement with the congregation added little notations which revealed a tolerant attitude.

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One woman stated, "It depends on how narrowly he holds his own views." Another said, if his views are in disagreement with your own, "have a sense of humor and hush up!" A rural school teacher in the North wrote, "Some people in the church are too far behind"; and a university instructor in the South pointed out that "the people might be wrong." A woman from the Carolinas added: "It is conceivable that the church membership are in error and the minister correct as to Bible teaching. He should interpret and lead." A young man suggested that disagreement "might be desirable if he [the minister] has new good ideas." An Illinois lawyer sagely remarked:

It seems certain that in every congregation there will be a variety of opinions and views on theological questions. The minister cannot help but hold views contrary to those of some of his congregation. It is not likely that his views will be contrary to the views of all.

I do not recall that a pastor of the church of which I am a member has ever been criticized for his theological views. However, I can understand that any one of them could have gotten into a violent controversy by an injudicious, persistent, or pugnacious attempt to thrust upon the congregation views which were decidedly contrary to their own. I have noted that the ministers serving this church have led the congregation on in the matter of theological views which enlarged their understanding of God and of their relation to him and to mankind.

### Sensationalism

Occasionally a preacher with an eye to publicity uses startling and at times impudent sermon titles. At the suggestion of a few lay leaders this topic also received attention in the study: "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he uses sensational or bizarre subjects in announcing sermons?" These lay leaders were correct in their judgment that church members generally dislike a sensational type of publicity, 79 per cent voting against it. The negative score of -4.9 indicates that, while lay people will tolerate this practice in a minister, they are decidedly in opposition to it. And there are no mitigating comments such as were called forth in the discussion of theological differences. No significant disagreement appears in the responses from different sections of the country. But evidently young people are not as averse to the introduction of startling sermon topics (-3.2) as are the lay leaders (-4.6) or the women (-5.9).

### Punctuality

If the question were decided by vote, all church services would start punctually and, as one young man noted, "end the same way." On this subject there is unanimity among all groups and the various geographical regions. Nine out of ten voted

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against a preacher who allows the service to get off to a late start. The average score is —5.2, with the sharpest opposition being registered by the women, —5.8.

Probably if ministers were asked about the punctuality of laymen, the score would be very similar. If 90 per cent of the laymen were seated in the sanctuary at the appointed hour, there would be fewer tardy preachers.

### Use of Ritual

Methodists enjoy a dignified, orderly service. This is true whether they lean toward the formal or informal type of procedure. They do not wish the preacher to be continually revising the order of worship. They are willing to have occasional changes made in the service, but they feel more at ease and participate more wholeheartedly when it proceeds according to an expected pattern. The young minister particularly is vulnerable to the temptation to revamp periodically the order of worship; and, while laymen will not ask for a change of pastors for this reason, they are nevertheless somewhat irritated by it on Sunday morning, as is indicated by the expressed opposition of 53 per cent. The lay leaders and women have exactly the same negative score of —2.5; youth, more experimentally inclined, had less objection (—1.0).

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Methodist men and women anticipate on Sunday morning attending a worship service which is "beautiful to the eye as well as to the mind," in the words of a farm housewife. Contrary to the general impression, they find satisfaction in the liturgy of the church. When asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he stresses the use of ritual in the worship service?" 46 per cent responded favorably, while only 17 per cent were opposed. The composite score was +2.2. The consensus throughout the church is evidenced in the similarity in the scores among the participating groups and in the different areas: lay leaders, +1.9; the two youth groups, +2.0 and +2.3; the women, +2.5.

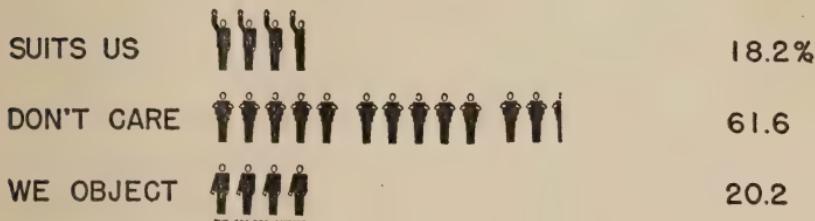
The term "ritual" undoubtedly carries many different connotations. For some it would refer to the reading of the Psalter and the repetition of the Apostles' Creed. Others might have in mind such items as the presentation of the offering at the altar followed by a choral response, the use of litanies, and so forth.

### Pulpit Gown

Though all desire a worshipful and aesthetically pleasing service, there is some disagreement as to the minister's wearing a pulpit gown when preach-

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ing. The use of a robe is viewed somewhat favorably in the northeast and slightly unfavorably in the southeast. Elsewhere it is apparently a matter of indifference. The score for the whole country and for all four groups is 0.0; there is no marked



general feeling pro or con. Six out of ten who replied on this question checked the middle column. The answers of the women and youth tended toward the plus side, but were balanced by the responses of the lay leaders on the minus side.

## Dignity in the Service

Unconcerned as laymen seem to be about such ecclesiastical accouterments as pulpit gowns, they do insist that the worship service be conducted with dignity and that the minister evidence "proper reverence." His parishioners may appreciate him as a wit or parlor entertainer, but they prefer that he not carry these qualities into the pulpit. They recognize that efforts at witticism on the one hand, or loud ranting on the other,

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cannot appropriately be associated with the sacred ceremonies of the church and are frequently a cover-up for inadequate preparation. Likewise, ignorance concerning correct procedures or ineptness in their performance so interferes with the seemly conduct of the services of the church that, according to the laymen, a man who is possessed of these traits is seriously handicapped in the work of the ministry. In response to the question, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he lacks dignity in performing ministerial functions, such as conducting the communion service or receiving members into the church?" the composite score is —6.8, 95 per cent expressing disapproval. The reaction of all areas and groups is practically identical.

### Pulpit Mannerisms

Annoying pulpit mannerisms are only slightly less displeasing to the laity than actual lack of dignity. The strong opposition to eccentric pulpit behavior is shown by the high negative score of --6.0; 98 per cent checked the question in one of the unfavorable columns.

Usually the minister is not aware of such idiosyncrasies. Often he would appreciate having his attention called to them in order that his message might be more favorably received. The conspiracy

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of silence among lay people, who deplore a fault but do not help the minister correct it, is illustrated in a comment from a southern youth leader:

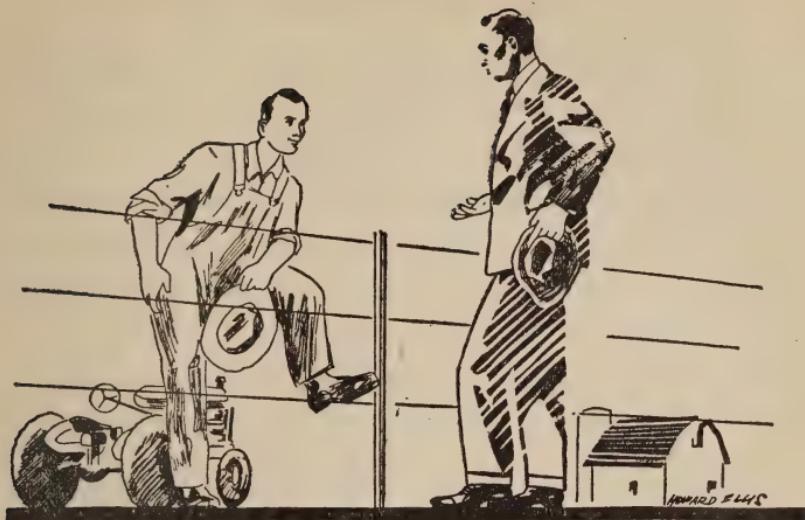
Our minister is a very good man, preaches excellent sermons. He has a fine speaking voice, but instead of using his normal voice when preaching he jumps up on a high pitch and keeps this up throughout his sermon. No one wants to ask him to please speak in a normal tone for fear of hurting his feelings.

Indistinct speech, or mumbling, was referred to explicitly in one question. As might be expected, this was regarded by all groups as a grievous handicap in a religious leader. The negative score of  $-6.4$  indicates properly that a minister who is not readily understood is in the wrong profession.

Few laymen would completely disqualify a man for making mistakes in grammar, but as an attorney from Alabama remarked: "We should like to see *all* ministers acquire a mastery of the English language." No one in a congregation, even the illiterate, will be offended by the use of correct rhetoric in the sermon, but every congregation will contain at least a few people who are disturbed by the absence of it. Ninety-four per cent deplored the use of poor grammar. The composite score was  $-5.4$ .

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Many interwoven factors contribute to the success of the Sunday-morning worship service. The interior decoration of the sanctuary, temperature and ventilation, the time of year, the anthem, the selection of the hymns, all have their influence in creating a setting within which God may speak to men. But when the worshipers return to their homes for Sunday dinner, the chief impression which most of them retain will be an outgrowth of the minister's effort to make God real to them in prayer, scripture reading, and sermon. This is the most important act of the preacher for the whole week, and to its proper performance lay people believe he should devote diligent, prayerful thought. On this more than on any other aspect of his work he will stand or fall.



## CHAPTER IV

### *The Minister as Pastor*

SECOND in importance only to preaching and conducting of worship services is the pastoral work of the minister. Many would place it first. Certainly the minister is regarded by church members and often by others in the community as a personal friend and spiritual guide, who may be approached for advice and assistance. This is historically a valid assumption for, according to the Gospel accounts, a great deal of Jesus' time was devoted to the pastoring or shepherding of people.

Today, as always, adults and youth alike are en-

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gulfed by the problems of personal and community living: the choice of a vocation, marital tensions, loss of a job, the death of a child, the awfulness of sudden blindness or the discovery of a cancer. Even more troublesome in the mass are the petty conflicts and fears whose number in every church is legion.

Every one of us is at times in need of a sympathetic counselor. Yet too often people who are plagued by some personal problem, to them insoluble, brood upon it, afraid to ask help; or they invoke the aid of medical or religious quacks, who for a price gaze into the crystal ball or interpret the stars.

### Pastoral Counseling

To people in trouble the service of the Christian minister should be available. Through the message entrusted to him he has something distinctive to say about the issues of life, something which should be helpful in problem solving and in creative living. Moreover, laymen expect this of him.

When asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he is unable to counsel people who have problems in their personal adjustment?" 87 per cent answered that skill in counseling is

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necessary for effective pastoral work. The score of -5.8 gives ample evidence of its importance to them. The lay leaders and women presented almost identical scores: -5.4 and -5.7. Young people attached even more significance to this aspect of pastoral service (-6.8). Possibly because they are more aware of counseling as a developing field of service, or possibly because they feel their own great need in an era of drastic social change, they think that ministers should be prepared to offer guidance in personal adjustment.

A man who is hesitant in dealing with issues or bashful in meeting people is himself in need of counseling. Yet some ministers, because of early experiences or inadequacy in training, feel insecure in social relationships and incapable of aiding persons who come for advice. To get the laymen's attitude toward timorous ministers they were asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he is hesitant and bashful in meeting people?" Clearly they deem such traits inappropriate in a religious leader. Their hearty disapproval is expressed by the adults in a score of -6.7, and by the youth in a score of -7.7. Here, again, the young people are even more demanding than their elders that the pastor of their church be alert, approachable, resourceful, and mature.

## Pastoral Calling

A second vital function of the pastor is calling on his parishioners. Although several laymen hinted that ministers waste considerable time in calling, the consensus was that "personal calls are very necessary." One of the women stated that "it is pleasant to have the pastor call in the evening when both husband and wife are at home." "At the very least," wrote a teacher, "he should visit the sick and the new."

In response to the question, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he makes few calls on his members?" the women disapproved by a score of -4.3; lay leaders, -4.8; and youth, still more critical, -5.6. "Too many Methodist ministers are making too few calls on members of their churches. People like to be made to feel important." Eighty-six per cent expressed dissatisfaction with a restricted calling program; less than 10 per cent preferred it. Pastoral calling, in the minds of laymen, continues to be an integral part of the minister's professional responsibility—not simply social calling, but calling at those times and places where he can, with the great resources at his command, bring comfort or religious insight or courage in the face of trial.

Laymen wish the minister to feel free to pray during a pastoral visit if the occasion warrants.

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However, parishioners dread the arrival of the unimaginative pastor who believes it necessary to kneel and offer a lengthy prayer at the conclusion of each call. A devout woman considers such prayers as "usually awkward." Others remarked that "circumstances should determine whether or not a prayer should be offered."

When asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he seldom prays during pastoral calls?" more than half registered an unfavorable reaction, with surprisingly similar responses among the four groups sampled—women, -1.5; lay leaders, -1.8; both youth groups the same, -2.0. The point which not a few ministers of today overlook is that lay people, young and old alike, recognize that there are certain occasions—conferences on personal problems, pre-marital interviews, visits to the sick, and so forth—when an appropriate prayer by a man of God is helpful and uplifting.

All calling is not carried on in parishioners' homes. During the day laymen are to be found in shop, office, or field, which are increasingly regarded by the minister as suitable places for a brief pastoral visit. In



order to discover what the laymen themselves think of this growing practice, the question was asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he calls on his laymen at their places of business?" There is an amusing aspect to the responses. The young people apparently saw no great value in the practice; their score was only slightly favorable (+1.2). The women thought better of this method of calling than did youth, for their score was +3.5. However, the lay leaders, who were the ones most directly affected, had a comparatively high score of +4.8. Only ten per cent of the laymen regarded the procedure as undesirable, although no doubt many others would subscribe to the warning voiced by one man: "The call should be brief, and the minister ought to have sense enough to see when he is in the way."

### Pastor and Young People

The work of the pastor is not limited to calling and counseling. As a shepherd of his people he is concerned with every aspect of life. Naturally, then, he will give time and thought to the young people, not simply in their religious but also in their social and recreational activities. There is no secret to the fact that the Christian church has been relatively ineffective in winning and main-

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taining the loyalty of the youth of our nation, or even of the church itself. Parents are concerned as they see their teen-age youth drop out of the worship services and drift away from the Christian fellowship.

What do lay people expect of the pastor in this regard? When asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he spends the major portion of his time and interest in the young people's program?" they responded decisively, 71 per cent approving. The favorable score of +4.2 is particularly significant since the similar question, "How acceptable . . . if he devotes the major portion of his time to preparing sermons?" called forth a response of +2.7. Lay people are more than willing for their pastor to spend much time and effort with the youth of church and community. They admit that "it can be overdone," that he should perhaps give a generous, though not the major, portion of his time. But they desire that the youth be not overlooked. The score for the young people was the same as for the general average, +4.2. For the lay leaders it was +3.6, while for the women it was +4.6.

Another relevant question was, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he directs church and community recreation?" The answer was coherent with the general lay desire to have

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the pastor active in community life, especially those phases relating to young people's work. Here the average score was +5.5. As might be expected youth displayed the most enthusiasm for this type of pastoral activity, both youth groups registering +6.0. However, the lay leaders were not far behind (+5.7). Members of some large churches stated, "The minister of our church would not have time if he carried on all his other work." A woman from Louisiana added, "Recreation should be a part of the program, but not necessarily be directed by the pastor."

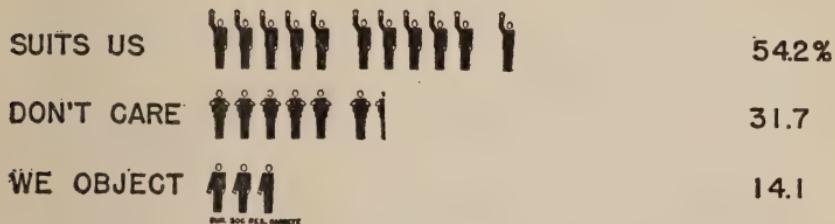
### Dancing under Church Auspices

While recreation in the church program is definitely acceptable, there is disagreement on certain specific aspects. Two questions were phrased around what has been a debatable and ticklish issue: "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he allows folk games in the church basement or social hall?" and "How acceptable . . . if he permits social dancing in the church basement or social hall?" The first question called forth a favorable response; the second evoked marked opposition. Folk games are adjudged by many recreation leaders—and it would seem that Methodist lay people concur—to be a more social activity and a more wholesome type of recreation

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and exercise than so-called "social" dancing. Methodists generally believe it proper to let young people play folk games in the church basement or social hall, as can be seen from the approving score of +3.4 on the question.

Understandably enough, the youth were particularly anxious that the church offer them the opportunity for such types of recreation (+6.0).



Although the response of adults was less enthusiastic, it was nevertheless favorable—lay leaders, +3.1; women, +2.7. Only 16 per cent of all the adults registered any opposition to the use of the church basement for this type of activity.

Different indeed was the response to the question involving social dancing. Here all four groups manifested disapproval. Youth, who had voted in



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favor of folk games (+6.0), rejected social dancing by a slight margin (-1.4). The adults were more strongly opposed to social dancing than were the young people—lay leaders, -4.7; women, -5.7. Seventy-two per cent of them stated that they regarded it as undesirable, more checking column 5 than column 4.

This was one of the few questions revealing sectional differences. Little opposition to social dancing in a church building was registered in the northeastern states. In the north central states, and even more in the South, the opposition was strong indeed. However, laymen differed among themselves within each area. It was a New York man who wrote: "I don't think dancing promotes Christianity in any way." And an oil jobber in Kentucky said: "I believe we must do this [permit social dancing in the church building] if proper supervision is to be given." Others stated, when they voted against social dancing, "In our community this is unwise," or, "It depends entirely on the situation." One young person who thought social dancing quite allowable in a social hall regarded it as improper in the church basement. A youth from Louisiana wrote:

I think young people should be allowed to enjoy folk games and dancing under the church roof or supervision,

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for that makes for cleaner, more innocent fun. And if you don't give it to them there, they will go where they can find it, most likely to a more undesirable place.

Here is a question on which there is, indeed, difference of opinion; and these conflicting views are found in every region.

Many laymen feel that the church is currently failing in its responsibility and missing its opportunity with young people in not providing an active social program for them, even though this might involve dancing. A lay leader from Pennsylvania had this to say:

While the Methodist Church frowns on dancing and the playing of many games, our board has instructed each of our pastors that we not only permit these things in our social hall, but that we encourage our young people to have their entertainment there. We feel that some forms of entertainment must be permitted to make it interesting for the young folk, or they will not turn out. And we would much rather have them enjoy themselves in our church, where we can chaperon them properly, than be smug and holy about it and tell them, "Now, you must not do these things here, because the church does not permit it," and by so doing have them go to road-houses, where temptations are greater and *no* control is possible. I personally believe that many of the young people are drifting away because our churches have failed to keep up with the times, and have neglected to realize that our present generation is mentally wide awake and does not swallow all that is said on faith.

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Decisions as to the content of the church program should not rest with the pastor alone. Nevertheless, as in this problem of social dancing, he has an unavoidable responsibility for clarifying the issue and achieving an amicable solution of it, perhaps in the form of some compromise to which all can agree. The same principle applies to a great deal of his pastoral work. As he touches individual lives, he can mitigate conflicts, interpret opposing views, and present possibilities for Christian action, as he cannot do from the pulpit.

To his people the good pastor is figuratively a father, whose chief function is not to suppress differences of opinion but to develop a genuine fellowship within the church family. He will have concern for the suffering of any who are in his flock, and will be prepared to offer wise counsel and to infuse Christian courage. This is one of the advantages, often unrecognized, which the older minister has. Just as the well-made violin, through many decades of handling, practicing of routine scales, and performing at concerts, acquires a beauty and mellowness of tone which is unmatched by any new instrument, so a minister who has lived and shared with his folk in many mundane and ordinary ways and also in periods of exaltation can pastor his people as a young man serving his novitiate ship cannot.



## CHAPTER V

### *The Minister as Administrator*

THOUGH laymen may think of him as the preacher, and though he himself may find his greatest satisfaction in pastoral work and counseling, the minister cannot forget that he is also the responsible administrative officer of an important community institution, which may include a few hundred or thousand members and have a budget of from \$2,000 to \$100,000 per year. The successful execution of this aspect of his work requires certain leadership traits and skills which are not

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demanded of a man as preacher or pastor. His administrative problem is accentuated because the church is a voluntary enterprise and cannot raise funds or develop its program by authoritarian or compulsive methods.

The ability of the pastor-preacher to develop a program and to work co-operatively with people is regarded by some laymen as of paramount importance. A newspaper editor wrote, "In my opinion the one thing on which a minister usually succeeds or fails is his organizing ability." It seemed appropriate in this study to raise a series of questions concerning the organizational and administrative skills of the minister, in order to discover what stress laymen place on these traits.

### **Leadership for Women and Children Only**

In the first place, laymen are dissatisfied with a minister who is effectual only with women and children. Why do not ministers reach more men? It is all too obvious that most congregations are predominantly composed of the former groups. Studies of the sex distribution of the membership in Methodist churches have demonstrated that in most instances not over 40 per cent of the total are males. Since in the younger ages there is usually a fairly even distribution between boys and girls, this means that often twice as many women belong

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to the church as men. Further, the attendance and participation record of the men who are members tends to be less satisfactory than that of the women.

Laymen who were consulted in planning the study felt that this unbalance in membership was in part due to lack of dynamic, imaginative ministerial leadership. At their suggestion a question was included, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he serves women and children well, but does not furnish challenging leadership for men?" An odd aspect of the responses is that women and youth showed even greater concern over this undesirable trait in a minister than did the lay men: women, -7.2; youth, -7.1; and lay leaders, -5.5. This strong negative reaction reveals serious dissatisfaction with any minister who cannot enlist the interest of the men of his community, or who in the development of the church program ignores the fact that there are in the community males beyond the age of twenty-one.

Women and children are admittedly more available during daytime hours; and men, because of their work routine, are often loath to devote what seems like scanty leisure to church projects. Perhaps, if the church undertook more challenging tasks, much of this indifference would disappear. Are not the financial vicissitudes of the church traceable, in part at least, to the fact that the men,

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who control the purse strings in major matters, have only a marginal concern for what their local church seems to be attempting? The responses in this and other studies seem to demonstrate that the women are more deeply implicated in the life of the church and exhibit greater concern for its welfare than do the men. How much more effective the Christian church could become if men developed an insight and solicitude comparable with that of the women!

### New Members

A second important index of a pastor's organizational skill is his ability to reach the unchurched and build them into the Christian fellowship. No institution can survive which fails to enlist new members. If the church hopes to win the larger community for Christ, it dare not be content simply with the training and confirmation of its own children. It must continuously seek out and persuade those who are unchurched that its message is vital to them and its fellowship a thing to be cherished.

Two pertinent questions, involving the training of classes for church membership and effectiveness in winning decisions for Christ, are discussed in Chapter II. Laymen by their answers made it evident that a minister who fails in either of these

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responsibilities is not qualified to serve in their churches.

### Development of Leadership

A third test of his administrative ability is a minister's success in developing leadership—and providing opportunities for its exercise—on the part of many in the congregation. Responses to the question, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he does not develop new leadership within the church?" showed interesting variations. To be sure, nearly all (88 per cent) disapproved a failure to develop new leadership ( $-6.1$ ). However, the lay leaders, who already have posts of significance in the local church, seemed less troubled ( $-4.8$ ) by this weakness in the pastor than the women ( $-5.5$ ), who also have in their own groups numerous avenues of self-expression. The young people ( $-6.8$  and  $-7.2$ ), who exercise least influence in framing church policy, were most critical of a minister who failed to provide opportunities for training and leadership.

Some pastors are discovering the chief strength for their church-school leadership among the young people. The reason is obvious. Whereas a man in middle years with diverse responsibilities may accept a new obligation under pressure or through appeal to his loyalty, a youthful church

member is pleased to be asked to make a creative contribution. He also has more vitality and can keep up with a class of junior boys with more satisfaction and skill than his elder. The assets of eagerness and physical stamina, provided they are matched with equal commitment and intelligence, can readily outweigh the greater knowledge and experience of an older person. The best way to underwrite the church of the future is to invite the full participation of young men and women in those years when their basic loyalties are being established. Yet there are few representatives of youth in the governing boards of the church and none in the General Conference.

### **One-Man Control**

In some churches one man, a family, or a small group of devout, sincerely interested people gradually acquire most of the positions of responsibility and carry them from year to year. This may occur because of an apparent dearth of other candidates. The pastor, to avoid either the risk of friction with the controlling group or the difficulties of initiating new unskilled officers, is content to let the situation continue as it is. At the other extreme are pastors who are constantly tinkering with the machinery of the church, seeking to play

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the role of king maker. Neither type builds strong churches.

Ninety-four per cent of the laymen disapprove of a minister who "assents to one individual or group keeping the same offices and controlling the policies of the church" (-6.7). The responses of the several groups showed little variance, ranging from -6.5 to -7.1. As one woman declared, "This condition leads to a dead church."

The solution of the problem is not to be found in a dictatorial minister, as a lay leader from Massachusetts made plain: "If a minister takes it upon himself to dictate who shall hold office in a church, more often than not the church will begin to decline. The nominating committee is the place to thresh this question out."

Less than two per cent of the participants indicated approval of a pastor who makes no effort to revolve responsibilities among the members. One of these, a lay leader, set forth the minority viewpoint unequivocally:

Since preachers are engaged and paid by the congregations to administer to the spiritual needs of their flock, they should confine their efforts to that end, and act in an advisory capacity only, where the material welfare and management of the church are concerned. No pastor has any business to object to a well-balanced and correctly functioning official board, no matter how long any individual or group has been in control, as long as annual

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elections return the same officials to office in the church. After all, any officials so elected are the proper representatives of the congregation, which is "footing the bills," and which will remain after preachers have come and gone. On our own board the baby member has served fourteen years, and the president is rounding out forty-four years of service. While none of the members is looking for these "jobs," they are nevertheless regularly returned by vote of the congregation.

The attitude of this layman is manifestly not representative. It may be pointed out that, under the circumstances described, no young person who has come of age in the past fourteen years and no one who has moved into the community in that time has had much opportunity to obtain recognition or achieve leadership skills in that church.

### Balance in the Program

A fourth check on a minister's administrative skill is his ability to see the significance of various aspects of the program without unduly stressing the one which may be of chief interest to him. An illustration of this is to be found in his attitude toward the church school. "How acceptable will a minister be if he feels that the church-school program competes with the Sunday-morning worship service?" Eighty-eight per cent thought this an undesirable attitude.

The composite score of —6.0 gives conclusive

evidence that lay people do not wish to be served by a minister whose interest in the church is primarily that it furnish him with an audience. They desire a man who is not only a preacher but also a pastor, whose concern extends beyond the worship service and includes every aspect of the educational and social life of the church. Where this is not the case, there is bound to be division and conflict. Fortunately, few ministers are now jealous of the church-school program.

### Intolerance

Because his position gives him, almost automatically, a certain authority and status both in the church and in the community, it is possible for a minister to take himself and his conclusions more seriously than is justified. Convinced of the validity of his own plans, such as the redecoration of the sanctuary or the selection of a new choir director, he may at the same time be tempted toward intolerance of those who oppose him. Such an attitude can quickly create dissension and vitiate the gospel which he preaches from the pulpit. A democratic spirit in the conduct of church affairs and in his relations with parishioners is an important asset for any pastor.

When asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he is intolerant of people who

disagree with him?" the laymen replied with strong voice (-7.4), "We do not want him." To a similar question, "How acceptable will a minister be . . . if he is undemocratic in the conducting of church affairs?" the response (-7.1) was almost identical. These reactions are quite understandable. The unfortunate situation in some churches seems to be:

Our minister lauds democracy and thinks he is very tolerant of people who disagree with him, when in reality he plays favorites with his supporters and is curt and even impolite with those who "oppose progress" as he sees it.

Even ministers may have blind spots. As the Master said in a somewhat different connection: "This kind of thing can be driven out only by prayer."

### Church Finances

The minister's relation to problems of finance will differ from church to church. In larger organizations income and expenditures are supervised by a finance committee subject to the approval of the governing board of the church. Generally the minister, since he is an ex officio member of the committee, is expected to have a share in its deliberations. In smaller societies he frequently must be the prime mover in planning and conducting the financial campaign. While it is de-

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sirable for this function to be performed in so far as possible by laymen, the minister cannot evade all responsibility. One layman wrote, "I think he should be spared this job; but, if the finance committee won't do it, he must."

Two questions related to finance were included in the study. First, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he is unwilling to assume some leadership responsibility for the financing of the church?" This was generally considered an undesirable trait, although it aroused less sharp criticism than did undemocratic behavior. One in five of the lay leaders thought it was "not the pastor's job," or remarked, "This is the work of the lay people." The women and the youth groups were more critical (-4.5 and -4.8) than were the lay leaders (-3.1). One of the latter remarked: "We expect to keep our church going in finances regardless of what preacher we have and hope the next one will be better."

When asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he does not consult with the church treasurer to see that church funds are spent as budgeted?" the lay leaders gave almost the same reply (-3.2) as to the preceding question, while the other two groups were again more critical (-5.7 and -5.8). The reason for these differences in reaction seems to be that some lay leaders, while

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wishing the minister to show a general interest in the subject of church finance, prefer that he not do too much "meddling."

There is no need of his doing this [consulting with the church treasurer] if the official board is properly conducted. The treasurer reports at each meeting and the board is kept up to date. It is nice if a minister will interest himself enough to inquire, but it shouldn't be necessary.

Three out of four of the laymen thought that he ought to assume some leadership in the financial program and also check occasionally with the treasurer to see that funds are properly expended.

### Loyalty to the Church

A source of great strength in Methodism is its connectional system. No congregation lives to itself alone, but is tied with others into a district under the administration of a superintendent. Several districts compose a conference, which operates under the supervision of a bishop. Even the smallest church participates in the benevolence enterprise of the whole denomination and may secure advice in the development of plans for its church school and other aspects of its program from the well-organized boards of the church. The pastor's attitude toward this larger connectional

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relationship has a definite bearing on his administrative policies.

Laymen were asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he stresses loyalty to the Methodist Church and its organization?" The question called forth a vigorous vote of approval, +7.6. Two out of every three who replied checked column 1, the maximum expression of approval. An additional 24 per cent checked column 2 indicating that they wished, but did not require, their minister to recognize the importance of the larger connectional system. They felt that he "should stress the world-wide organization of the Methodist Church."

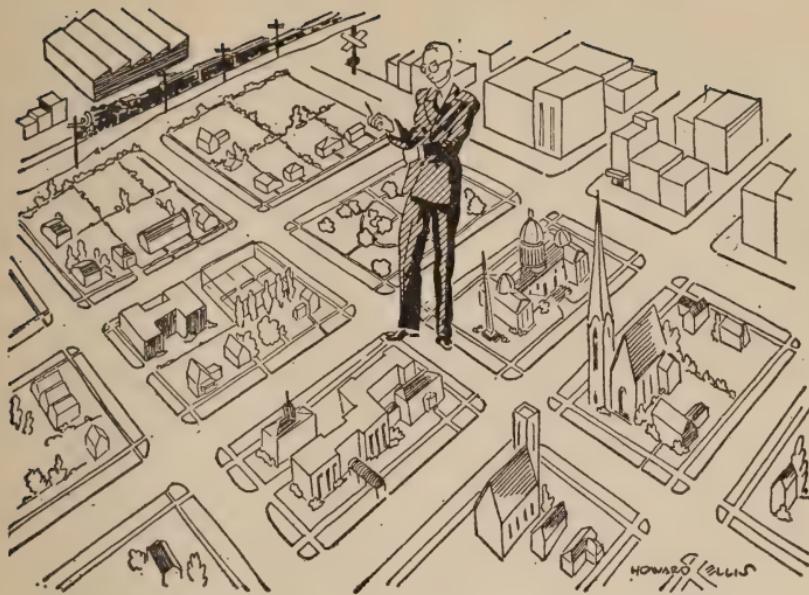
Methodists, however, are not narrowly sectarian. A layman of mature years expressed this opinion as follows: "Loyalty to a church is to be very greatly desired, but if a minister is going to preach blind loyalty to a Methodist doctrine to the exclusion of all other groups or creeds, I would disqualify him immediately." And a college student wrote what most Methodists probably feel, "This is desirable if he does not try to make loyalty to the Methodist Church an end in itself."

A second question, more specific, was phrased negatively: "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he makes no effort to maintain a good relationship between the local church and

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the district superintendent, bishop, and the general boards of the church?" Those participating in the opinion poll voted strongly toward the negative end of the scale, —7.5. Two out of three indicated that if the minister were not interested in maintaining cordial and co-operative relations with the administrative officers and agencies of the church, he would be disqualified to serve as their pastor.

This negative score, —7.5, almost exactly balances the positive score evoked by the preceding question concerning loyalty to the Methodist Church (+7.4). On this item, as on many others, Methodist people have a very explicit idea as to what they want in their pastor-preacher. Responses to two other parallel questions involving the world-wide missionary program of the church, discussed in Chapter VII, are corroborative.



## CHAPTER VI

### *The Minister and Community Responsibility*

OUT beyond the bounds of his church and his membership three wider community responsibilities press in upon the Christian minister. The first, and for many men the most weighty, is the obligation to reach and win those who have made no Christian profession. A second, closely related to both first and third, is the establishment of co-operative and friendly relations with other ministers and denominations for the

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winning of the unchurched and the transforming of the community. The third is to exert influence on the secular forces in the community, to bring them increasingly into conformity with Christian standards.

### The Church—for Members Only

Even though church members may not be aware of the fact, countless men and women of America have the notion that a church is a kind of private club conducted for the benefit of its members. As the twelve-year-old son of a prominent religious leader said to his mother, when she proposed attending a worship service of a different denomination, "But, Mother, would they let us in?"

In a study<sup>1</sup> of the churches of nine different denominations in thirty-three cities, ministers were asked, "For whom is the program of your church designed?" and "What specifically is your church doing for non-members?" The responses of the ministers confirmed the common secular opinion that the program of the church is designed "primarily for members," although "others are welcome." As a matter of fact, a third of these churches, nominally existing to "seek and save the lost," were, admittedly, carrying on a more or less limited program "for members only."

<sup>1</sup> M. H. Leiffer, *City and Church in Transition*, Willett, 1938.

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Not many congregations would state this as their avowed aim, but in practice it is true of a large proportion. The Christian church, like other organizations, manifests a dangerous tendency to become ingrown. The pastor is so preoccupied with the many needs of his own flock, the members are so well acquainted with one another and engrossed in their own activities, that all too frequently only lip service is given to reaching the unchurched and building a wider fellowship.

It is always, unfortunately, necessary to distinguish between the stated ideal and the actual practice: A layman who would conscientiously assert that his church welcomes to its fellowship all newcomers who wander in on Sunday morning may in practice be so busy talking over his golf score or the state of the crops with other men of the congregation that he neglects to speak to the stranger within the gates.

Methodist laymen included in the opinion poll declared their conviction that the effective minister must be able to win decisions for Christ (Chapter II). To turn this ideal into reality will require not only diligent work on the part of the pastor, but also strong support and assistance by lay men and women, in visiting the homes of people without church association and in integrating newcomers into the organized life of the church. This

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does not call for a campaign, but rather for steady, week-by-week, conscientious service.

### Interchurch Services

Perhaps the most innocuous type of community outreach on the part of a church is the establishment of friendly relations with other congenial, local religious organizations. This commonly takes the form of uniting in special services on

religious holidays. Beginning at this point, laymen were asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he co-operates with ministers of other denominations in Thanksgiving and pre-Easter services?" The exceptionally high score of +9.0 makes plain the fact that this form of interchurch fellowship is now accepted throughout the Methodist Church.



Four out of five laymen indicated that they very much desired this in their minister. Only one in a thousand objected.

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Methodists are, and always have been, ecumenical in spirit. Their faith is inclusive rather than exclusive. In small communities and large cities across the land, the Methodist denomination constitutes the core of interchurch endeavor. Manifestly, its lay people are wholeheartedly in support of such an outreach.<sup>2</sup>

Commendable is the establishment of friendly ties with other Christian churches. More courage is required, because more vocal opposition will be faced, when Christian people seek to reach out into the community to change secular practices which appear contrary to Christian teachings.

### Action on Community Evils

From the time of John Wesley until now, Methodists have been in the advance patrols battling against the evils in the community which jeopardize the growth of personality. This influential denomination has been most vocal and persistent in opposing the liquor traffic. Its ministers have preached against the saloon, against gambling and vice. They have participated on housing and child-welfare committees and have argued to

<sup>2</sup> This community interest is confirmed by the eagerness of laymen to have their pastor play a directing role in developing church and community recreation. The score on this question, discussed in Chapter IV, was + 5.5.

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lengthen the school term and to improve the quality of education. What do the laymen think about these efforts to lift the standards of community physical, intellectual, and spiritual well-being?

Since it is no secret that such efforts are not always successful, the question on this point was phrased, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he refuses to try to correct unwholesome community conditions?" Throughout the country lay people are disappointed when their religious leaders are not actively concerned for community welfare (-5.6). Eighty-four per cent deprecate insensitivity to community needs in a pastor. Only a small minority indicated by their checking that they preferred their minister to refrain from involvement in such issues. A logical presumption on the basis of this response would seem to be that laymen are not at all averse to their pastor's being politically active to the extent that this is necessary in the struggle for a more decent community. Nevertheless logical presumptions do not necessarily carry over into actual situations.

Laymen may at times differ with one another and perhaps with the minister as to what do constitute anti-social situations. However, if their pastor can help them see that certain specific local

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conditions are inimical to the wholesome rearing of children and youth, or that they thwart the growth of personality, then few indeed will be the Methodist laymen who will oppose him.

It would be interesting to know to what extent this community-mindedness on the part of laymen is a reflection of the preaching and practice of their pastors. Methodist ministers through the decades have been leaders in community betterment, and generally their laymen render them vigorous support.

The wholehearted opposition of the lay leaders to a pussy-footing minister who is afraid to speak out against forces which are harmful within the community is shown by their score of —4.6 which, being interpreted, means that, while on the average they will put up with the man, they regard timorousness on social issues with disfavor. The women are even more critical (—5.7), with 52 per cent of them stating that such equivocal conduct would disqualify a man for leadership in their church. The youth, as might be expected, register still greater opposition to a pastor who is indifferent or evasive concerning unwholesome aspects of community life (—7.7).

The attitude of lay people toward several specific social issues will be discussed in Chapter VII.

### Speeches Before Rotary

Another important phase of the minister's relation to the community is his participation as a member or speaker in the various societies, clubs, or other organizations. Two items, widely separated from each other in the questionnaire, had bearing on this point. "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he is a popular speaker at the Chamber of Commerce and service clubs, such as Rotary?" In general, church people are glad to have their preacher appear before gatherings of this type. The lay leaders, most of whom are men, are very favorably inclined, +5.2; the women (+3.3) and youth (+4.0) regard it as less important. Several of the lay people, especially those in larger cities, think their pastor "spends too much time that way." Thirty-eight per cent of the laity, but only 25 per cent of the lay leaders indicated indifference or opposition. In the main a limited amount of such community service is regarded as a logical part of the pastor's responsibility.

### Speeches at Labor Union Meetings

When asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he makes occasional addresses at labor union meetings?" Methodist lay people showed much more coolness in their replies, even

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though the question itself implied less participation than the one on speaking before luncheon clubs [business and professional people]. Some in each adult group—lay leaders and women—approved their pastor's addressing labor unions, but these were almost evenly balanced by others who were definitely opposed to it. The score for lay leaders was +0.6 and for the women, +0.5, indicating a general indifference as to the minister's association with organized labor groups, which today comprise the mass of urban skilled and semi-skilled workers.

The replies of the laymen show a cautiousness which was not evident in comments on the pastor's addressing the Chamber of Commerce. "It depends on his locality. Can he do good or not?" Such a query was not raised in connection with the matching question. There it was assumed that the minister would speak as a Christian leader and good citizen.

An Illinois layman wrote prudently:

It depends upon the kind of addresses he makes and upon whether his attitudes on questions of organized labor are of a judicious nature, tending to promote good will and understanding, or whether they may be the opposite. . . . I think laymen as a rule would desire their ministers to take a constructive, Christian viewpoint and occasionally, at least, discuss these questions in such a manner as to promote harmony.

## THE LAYMAN LOOKS AT THE MINISTER

The young people attached some value to having the minister speak as a Christian leader at labor union meetings, the scores being +1.1 for the general youth group, and +3.9 for the Methodist Youth Council group. This is one of the few questions where there was any marked difference in the reaction of the two youth groups.

Rural people and those living in small cities—cities under 10,000—showed no enthusiasm for having the minister associated with organized labor groups. This is accounted for in part by the absence of organized labor in many communities. Several noted: "We have no labor unions around here." In only two regions did urban Methodists—cities over 10,000—respond with any warmth to this proposal: the north central states, +2.3; the far western states, +3.4.

The one group which showed marked approval was the laymen of the Central Jurisdiction (Negro). The lay leaders, the women, and the youth who are members of churches in this jurisdiction, whether in rural or urban areas, all alike presented scores of approximately +6.0. One cannot help wondering whether the difference in response is due to the fact that the Negroes have in considerable measure identified themselves with the laboring classes, while white Methodists generally feel themselves to be members of the "mid-

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dle class." These scores seem to support the claim of labor leaders that the Protestant Church has little positive concern for them, in spite of its many formal pronouncements.

The Methodist Church is, and doubtless will remain, an institution closely identified with the community and its people. Methodists expect their church to be active in community betterment. They have consistently through the decades opposed such acknowledged evils as the liquor traffic and vice. However, on some other issues of community debate they are less certain. While they look with favor on the pastor's speaking before professional and employer groups, they are not sure whether other associations, which are often thought of as class and conflict groups, should have the benefit of his counsel. On this topic the Methodist people have not made up their minds.



## CHAPTER VII

### *The Minister and Social Issues*

FROM its very beginning the Methodist Church and its members have been concerned with the task of building a more Christian world. This was evident in the ministry of John Wesley, who opened the first free medical dispensary in London, established a home for the aged and an orphanage and training school for children. In 1740, a period of severe economic distress, he began the practice, which he continued throughout his life, of raising money to bring systematic relief to the hungry and the destitute. In 1759 he visited

and assisted French prisoners of war in a camp near Bristol. He sought to broaden the educational system of his day and inveighed against drunkenness and immorality. Repeatedly in his sermons on "the danger of riches" he protested that Christians cannot serve both God and mammon.

In the time-honored General Rules of the church, formulated and passed on by John Wesley, it is explicitly stated that there is only one condition required for admission to a Methodist society—"a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." However, the very next sentence continues: "But wherever this is really fixed in the soul it will be shown by its fruits." The General Rules then proceed: "It is therefore expected of all who continue therein [in the Methodist Church] that they shall continue to evidence their desire of salvation" by avoiding proscribed behavior which is spiritually and socially harmful and "by doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men: to their bodies, . . . to their souls. . . ."

With this heritage it is not surprising that the Methodists were among the first to enunciate a formal "social creed" in 1908. Later that same

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year the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ was organized and adopted almost verbatim a similar statement of belief.

In harmony with the traditional position of their church Methodist laymen expect prophetic leadership of their preachers and censure a minister who makes no effort to correct unwholesome community conditions (—5.6). And they regard him as essentially disqualified for religious leadership if he hesitates to take the initiative on Christian issues (—7.0).<sup>1</sup> One layman voiced the attitude of many: "The writer desires to see our Methodist ministry filled with men of conviction concerning the application of the gospel to our present-day living conditions."

### The Liquor Traffic

It is relatively easy to secure agreement provided "social ideals" are stated in vague and general terms. To what extent is there consensus among Methodists on specific social issues? One of the most natural queries to put to them is, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he preaches against the liquor traffic?" This is a problem on which the Methodist Church has spoken with unanimity for many decades. Commonly, prior to the first World War, one Sunday worship

<sup>1</sup> See pages 26-27 and 66-68.

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service each year was devoted to excoriating the saloon and raising funds for the Anti-Saloon League. Although this practice has been largely discontinued, the present poll shows that Methodists—over 95 per cent of them—strongly favor a minister who “preaches against the liquor traffic.” The composite score is +8.2, so high that there can be no doubt concerning the attitude of the church. The district and associate district lay leaders had a score of +7.6; youth, +7.7; and the women, +9.0.

Only thirteen in a thousand disapproved the open condemnation from the pulpit of the use of alcoholic beverages. Among this minority is a layman from Pennsylvania who sees no connection between “preaching the Word of God” and such issues as this one:

I personally feel that a minister should confine his sermons to preaching the Word of God, instead of delivering tirades against liquor, cigarettes, dancing, etc. . . . Many, many a Methodist has switched his faith [sic] or stopped going to church because Methodist preachers are required to denounce liquor, etc., from the pulpit regularly, and many do it in the most offensive ways.<sup>2</sup> . . . Excesses should be curbed by law and/or education, but *not* from the pulpit.

<sup>2</sup> While the Methodist Discipline states, “Each pastor should present the cause of temperance . . . ,” no minister is “required” to preach against liquor, cigarettes, or dancing.

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Other Methodists are of the opinion that the minister has an obligation to educate as well as to edify, and that the best way to obtain needed changes in the law is for Christian leaders to be active to that end.

### Acquisitiveness

Much less vigorous was the response of laymen to another time-honored teaching of the church. In his sermons and in the General Rules which he established for Methodist societies Wesley condemned the struggle for riches, conspicuous consumption, "softness and needless self-indulgence," and "laying up treasure on earth."

In his exegesis (Sermon XXVIII) of the Sermon on the Mount he declared:

"Lay not up," saith the Lord, "treasures upon earth." If in spite of this you do, and will lay up money or goods, . . . if you will add house to house, or field to field,—why do you call yourself a Christian? You do not obey Jesus Christ. . . . Why do you name yourself by his name? "Why call ye me Lord, Lord," saith he himself, "and do not the things which I say?"

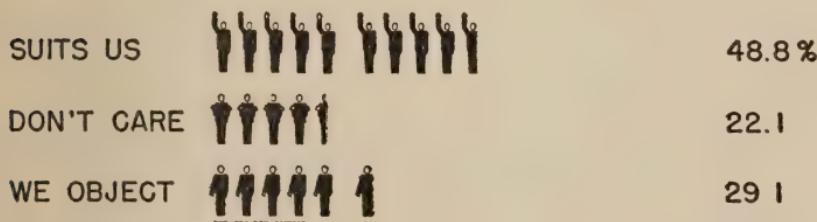
If you ask, "But what must we do with our goods, seeing we have more than we have occasion to use, if we must not lay them up? Must we throw them away?" I answer, if you threw them into the sea, if you were to cast them into the fire and consume them, they would be better bestowed than they are now. You cannot find so

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mischievous a manner of throwing them away, as either the laying them up for your posterity, or the laying them out upon yourselves in folly and superfluity. Of all possible methods of throwing them away, these two are the very worst; the most opposite of the gospel of Christ, and the most pernicious to your own soul.

He preached other sermons in similar vein (XCII and CXIII). The deep-rooted and almost universal acquisitive desire among human beings presents a fundamental Christian ethical problem. What is the opinion of present-day Christians?

When lay people were asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he preaches against acquisitiveness and the desire to get more and more 'things'?" the response demonstrates that the presentation of this doctrine from the pulpit is not much more palatable in the twentieth century than in the eighteenth or the first.



The composite response was +1.7. This score plainly does not furnish a strong endorsement of such preaching, inasmuch as 0.0 would evidence either complete indifference or a balance of op-

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posing points of view. Since the question was stated in general and conventional terms and in affirmative phraseology, if the participants were either hesitant to express themselves or unclear as to meaning, their tendency would have been to indicate approval rather than disapproval. In other words, the resultant score was at least as high as people intended it to be. The youth of the church, who at present have little of this world's material goods, were more favorable to preaching against acquisitiveness (+2.7) than their elders; the women had a score of +1.9; and the lay leaders, the large majority of whom are men, +1.2. "How hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!"

### The Delinquent

American citizens are being compelled to face the problem of mounting delinquency. What is the attitude of the church to be toward the offender when he seeks to re-establish himself in society? This question is doubly pertinent because of the wave of delinquency and crime which always follows a war. The laymen were asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he should encourage a young man on prison parole to attend your young people's meeting?" About four out of every five (82 per cent) indicated that

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they approved such a policy on the part of their pastor. Many, while approving, added a notation, "It depends on the offense," or, "Circumstances might make a difference." The combined score of +6.6 shows marked social awareness on the part of Methodist laity toward this type of problem.

Highest approval of extending pastoral care to the delinquent came from the young people; the two youth groups registered scores of +7.5 and +7.2. One young woman added, however, "Many of the older members do not feel this way." The women followed next, +6.8, while the lay leaders averaged +6.1. It is quite plain that the Methodist people, young and old, desire that the resources of the church, social as well as spiritual, be utilized to rehabilitate the erstwhile offender. Relevant is the remark of an attorney:

I have intended that my check marks reflect my general notion that emphasis in the Christian Church should be on social service. Perhaps I have arrived at that conclusion by reason of my experiences as Judge of the Juvenile Court of \_\_\_\_\_ County, Delaware.

I am personally convinced that if the church does not get actively into the matter of social work and particularly into the matter of reconstruction of homes, dark days are ahead for the church and for the nation.

The testimony of social workers in our large cities is that a few ministers, in co-operation with judges

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and probation officers, have done yeoman work in re-establishing delinquent boys and girls in a friendly and supporting social group. Unfortunately, most ministers find themselves so pressed by day-to-day parish responsibilities that they have little energy or interest remaining for this time-consuming work.

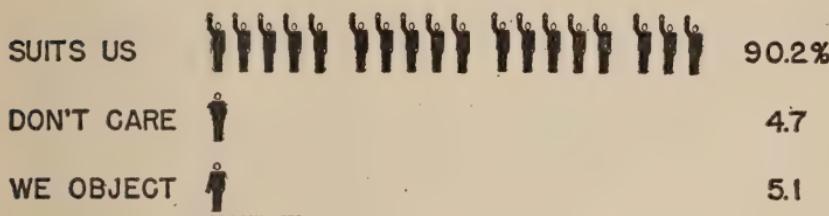
### Equal Opportunities for All Races

Perhaps the most vexatious and ubiquitous problem of our age is the relation between the various races. The historic teaching of Christianity is that all men, regardless of race, are sons of God and therefore brothers. To what extent has this doctrine been accepted by the laity of the Methodist Church? Three questions bearing on this subject were included in the study.

The first question, while definite concerning ministerial behavior, does not necessarily commit the laymen themselves to any particular action pattern: "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he proclaims equal opportunities and responsibilities for all racial and nationality groups?" Nine out of ten vote their support of such teaching by checking in column 1 or 2. The composite score of +7.7 is so high as to testify beyond doubt that Methodists oppugn any racist ideology. The group scores were: lay leaders,

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+7.0; women, +8.3; each youth group, +8.0. Not only is the doctrine of brotherhood explicitly endorsed by them as a valid Christian teaching, but they respond with such affirmation to this question that it is evident they expect of their ministers an overt proclamation of the doctrine from



the pulpit. Only 5 per cent expressed themselves as in opposition to such teaching.

Inevitably some persons thought of this question in terms of Negro-white relations, and it was this inference which called forth the remarks of the few dissenters. Not all of the negative comments came from the South. One of this small minority, a woman from Illinois, wrote sharply and sarcastically:

Having gone through grade school, high school, and college with negroes and then moved South, I can see as I never saw before that the average Northerner, who has *never* had a negro on his payroll or in his home, knows more about solving race problems than men who have large groups of negro employees in skilled work over many years in the South.

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Before anyone expresses his opinion on the race question he should be under negro domination awhile. . . . There are two Christian points of view. Having seen both, I'll take the South.

On such a question as this, some differentiation between the regions of the country is to be expected. However, the typical laymen of the South, like their fellows elsewhere, expect the Christian doctrine of brotherhood to be proclaimed from the pulpit. The score in the southeastern states was +5.6 and in the south central, +6.7. This agreement throughout the country is at once evidence of the effectiveness of continued Christian preaching over the years, and a heartening sign for the peaceful and Christian solution of the problems which characteristically arise where there are marked differences in race, nationality, or culture.

### Anti-Semitism

A closely related question, more specific in its phrasing, was, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he is outspoken against the Jews as a class?" Methodist lay people are as strongly opposed to anti-Semitic comments from their minister as they are in favor of the teaching of Christian brotherhood. Less than 2 per cent display an anti-Jewish attitude. The composite score of -8.1

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shows one of the most vigorous reactions that was found in the entire study. Worth noting is the fact that all sections of the country, urban as well as rural, agreed in their condemnation of anti-Semitism on the part of a pastor. Group scores were: lay leaders, -7.6; women, -8.6; each youth group, -8.1.

One layman spoke resolutely for his fellows on this subject:

A preacher's duty is to interpret and preach the gospel. It is decidedly *unchristian* for any pastor to use his position in the pulpit to rant against or condemn any other race or religion. It is also un-American. If Jews or other believers are wrong, then it will be the Lord's pleasure to judge.

### Minister of a Different Race

The third problem presented for the laymen's judgment was difficult for them to answer, because it propounded a hypothetical situation which probably none of them had faced in actuality, and which involved not an attitude held by the minister but rather his racial heritage. "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he is thoroughly qualified and can speak English well but is of a different race from the majority of the congregation (as Indian, Filipino, or Chinese-American serving a white or Negro congregation)?" To this question there was a generally negative or unfa-

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vorables response. The composite score was —4.2. The opposition to being served by a minister of another race was only half as vigorous as to the teaching of anti-Semitism, the scores being —4.2 and —8.1 respectively. However, it is probable that there is much more of emotional surcharge in this answer than in the previous one.

Interpreted literally, the score indicates that the church as a whole and also laymen in the various sections of the country—Negro as well as white—regard it as undesirable to have a minister of another race serve their congregation, although they would not refuse to accept him provided he is thoroughly qualified. If such a situation actually arose in a congregation, the likelihood is that the adverse reaction would be stronger than the score denotes; that is, people when not faced with a specific local issue tend to be more objective and tolerant in their judgment. In their replies to this question, as to many others, the lay leaders manifested greater conservatism than did either the women or the youth. Perhaps the response of the lay leaders reflects more exactly what would occur if such a situation arose, and may be more realistic. Their score was —5.0; the women's, —4.3. The young men and women registered, quantitatively, less than half as much opposition (—2.1) as their elders.

## THE MINISTER AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Significant is the fact that approximately one out of three persons—31.7 per cent—indicated that it was “not important one way or the other” to them if the minister was of a different race provided he was equally well qualified.

This question stimulated many detailed expressions of opinion from people in various sections of the country. A layman from the North wrote: “I think a Chinese-American should preach to the Chinese. I would not refuse to go to hear one. I have heard them several times and will again, but for a regular minister I should have to vote against him.” Equally unequivocal is the comment of a Kentuckian, “I believe no white congregation should have a Negro pastor nor vice versa. No mixed groups.”

Matching the forthright opposition of some laymen to a minister of another race are others who do not think this should make any difference among Christians. An Indiana nurse and housewife affirmed, “If he is capable and co-operative, there should be no difference.” A stenographer from the South wrote: “It is not important if he is thoroughly qualified; we should not discriminate.” A young rural-school teacher added: “Personally this would make no difference; however, it would to the older members of the congregation.”

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Most of the comments fall between these sharply opposed viewpoints. The majority of the correspondents seem to be of the opinion that, while theoretically the factor of race ought not influence the judgment of lay people in their choice of pastors, in actual fact the tensions which cluster around racial differences in society are such as to make impractical, if not impossible, the employment of a pastor of a different race. A Kentucky college student voiced the thought in these words: "This is not to express a racially prejudiced view. It just is practical for the minister to be of the same race as the majority of his parishioners." A young person from the North viewed the matter similarly: "Honestly, I don't know how to answer. I do think a resident pastor would be happier with his own people and vice versa, but I personally enjoy hearing speakers of other races and nationalities—M.Y.F. training, I think."

Methodists, like other Americans, live in a world where in voluntary associations race and nationality are still bases of selection. Just as the "American Church" in Paris or Berlin had for a pastor, not a German or even an Englishman, but an American, so Swedish, German, and Italian congregations in America prefer pastors who speak their language and have the same background. Likewise Mexican and Negro congrega-

tions have a strong preference for a leader from their own racial group.

The general taboos and standards of the community certainly have an important influence on the response to this difficult question. A bank cashier from Virginia replied: "I am afraid that a woman, or a member of another race, could not qualify in my particular community, regardless of other qualifications. We still have a long way to go here."

Rigid though the self-protective in-group feeling may be, a number conceded that exceptional leaders with outstanding personalities from an out-group, such as another race, might conceivably hurdle the barrier. Three women of mature years from different sections of the South, each of whom indicated that the factor of racial difference was "undesirable but would not disqualify," wrote in similar vein: "No, unless strong enough in personality to overcome the difference." "This would be greatly dependent on the personality of the man." "He might have some difficulty unless he had a very attractive personality."

Of particular interest in this connection is the fact that, while Methodist laymen expressed a thoroughly understandable preference for a pastor of their own race or nationality, many exhibited signs of dissatisfaction with their own posi-

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tion, lest it be thought to invalidate the Christian claim of world brotherhood.

From the replies to the three preceding questions involving racial issues, it seems unmistakable that Methodist people have, in the main, accepted as valid the Christian doctrine concerning brotherhood. They expect their ministers to preach this doctrine, and object if they do not. They dislike anything which is clearly recognized by them as racist ideology (cf. the response to the question on anti-Semitism), but they prefer to have as their pastor a member of their own racial group.

### The World Service Program of Benevolence

The benevolence program of a church is a measure of its world vision. The Methodist denomination, with its strong central organization, has for generations consecrated personnel and resources to social service and evangelistic endeavor both at home and in other lands. This outreaching program, which goes by the name of World Service, is supported by voluntary gifts from churches of the denomination. In an effort to distribute equitably the financial responsibility for this program, each church is assigned an "apportionment" based on such factors as the size of the membership, the amount paid for the pastor's salary, size of contributions in previous years, and so forth. Inevi-

tably some lay people and occasionally a minister will be unco-operative in this broader enterprise, insisting that it is better to "keep the money at home" in order to pay for a beautiful sanctuary or to offer a higher salary for a minister. It is this comparison of interests—the desire to raise and keep as much money as possible for the local program compared with providing funds for outside endeavors—which gives another indication of the social vision of Methodist people.

Two complementary questions bearing on this aspect of the church's work were set before the laymen. "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he pressures the people in order to meet the apportionment for World Service?" and "How acceptable . . . if he 'soft pedals' World Service (missionary) giving, in order to boost the local church budget?" In their answers to these questions the laymen indicated not only the kind of pastor which they prefer, but also indirectly their own attitude toward giving for missionary and social-service enterprises.

The questions were framed so that neither sets forth a particularly desirable attitude on the part of the pastor. As was expected, the inclusion of the word "pressure" in the first question resulted in some adverse responses: "Persuasion is more proper than pressure." "There are other methods

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which are more desirable," wrote a woman who checked this question in column 5, indicating extreme disapproval. "Consistent effort on the part of the pastor, but not pressure" was the recommendation of a teacher, while a barber added, "There is no need for pressure if he [the pastor] goes about it the right way." Laymen properly feel that "a good church organization should eliminate the need for pressure." Nevertheless, when the composite response is computed, the average is exactly 0.0, with the adult groups slightly on the approving and the youth groups slightly on the disapproving sides. The reason for this is plain. Laymen do not like pressure, but they regard the benevolence program as important and consequently will tolerate the use of pressure, even though it is obnoxious to them, in order to achieve the desired goal.

This interpretation is supported by the answers to the next question. Men and women throughout the church—95 per cent in the opinion poll—do not want a minister to "soft pedal" World Service giving. Said a man from the South:

This happened in our church. World Service was cut from \$1300 to \$200, and the local budget was also reduced, also the pastor's salary. He objected to sending out so much money—even preached against it. He is no longer in the ministry.

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The composite score of —6.5 is a vigorous rebuke for ministers who play down the world-wide program of the church. Sharpest disapproval came from the women (—7.4), followed by youth (—6.0) and lay leaders (—5.7). These people expect their ministers and their church to have world vision. Pastors need not be embarrassed in asking support for the far-reaching enterprises of the church.

It cannot be claimed that the enlightened social conscience which is demonstrated by the answers in this chapter will be found in all people who call themselves Methodist. However, these are the reactions of men, women, and youth who represent the active and devoted leadership within that church.



## CHAPTER VIII

### *The Minister as a Man*

THE minister is not simply a preacher, a pastor, a spokesman on community and social problems. He is first of all a man—a personality. His appearance, his manner of meeting people, his habits of thought and conduct have bearing on the effectiveness of his work. If he is cordial, straightforward, and winsome, he will meet with a warm and hearty response. As a pastor with many years of experience phrased it: "If the people feel that you love them, they will forgive your differences of opinion and even some odd vagaries."

While many of the traits discussed in previous

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chapters throw light on the attitudes which lay people hope to find in their minister, no mention has been made of three important items: his personal appearance, his habits of behavior, and his relationship with members of his own family. A few questions on each of these subjects were also included.

### Weight

What about the minister's appearance? During preliminary discussions of the project some laymen, remarking on the tendency toward obesity in a sedentary profession, proposed the question, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he is greatly overweight?" The lay response to this query is represented by a score of -3.0, indicating that excessive weight is a handicap, but not an insuperable one. This rating is approximately halfway between column 3—"not important one way or the other"—and column 4—"undesirable but would not disqualify." The responses of the lay leaders and the women showed the same average, -3.3. Youth (-1.3) were less inclined to criticize the portly brother.

Some laymen suggested that ministers do not get enough physical exercise to keep in the best of health. Much dining out, plus too much sitting, may result in stolidity and stodginess. One parish-

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ioneer, referring to a minister's excessive dependency on his car, remarked: "If preachers found it necessary to do some of their calling on foot, it might make them more sympathetic with others. Also, without question, it would help greatly in the matter of being overweight. . . ."

### Tidiness in Personal Appearance

Although lay people are not inclined to be sharply critical of the obese minister, perhaps with



the thought that it may not be his fault, they have very little patience with the pastor who "is untidy in his personal appearance." Ninety-eight per cent of his parishioners will vote against him. Over half of the lay people regard carelessness of personal appearance and slipshod dress as a disqualifying factor. The composite score of -7.5 on this question falls exactly at the mid-point between column 4 ("undesirable but would not disqualify") and column 5 ("this would disqualify"). Women are even more outspoken (-8.1) than lay leaders (-7.0) or youth (-7.1). Possibly that is because they have more frequent contact

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with the minister on days other than Sunday, when he tends to be at his best.

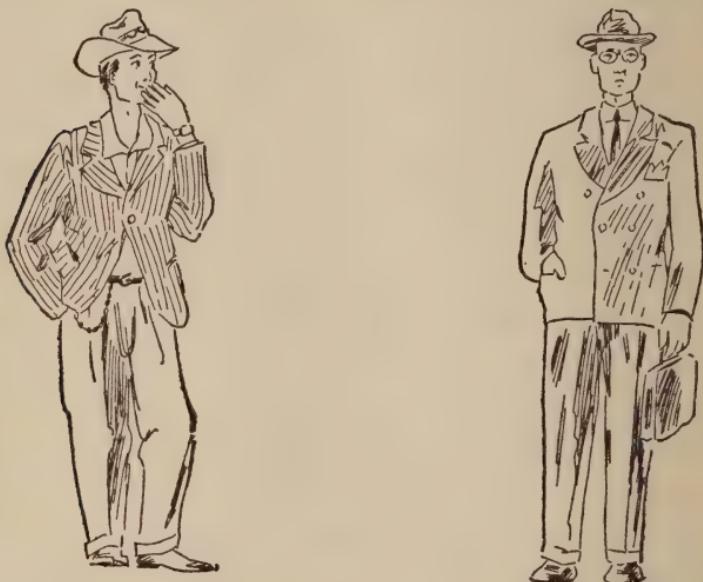
Reference here is, of course, not to expensive or fashionable clothing but to neatness in appearance—to shirts with clean collars and cuffs, to vests without gravy spots, to shoes that are shined, to finger nails that are clean, and to hair that is combed. These attributes are not out of range for any man, no matter how small his salary. Lay people are much aware of such apparently minor details, although they say not a word to the pastor or his wife.

### Flashy or Somber Clothes

The time was when a stranger walking down the street of a country town could pick out the preacher on the basis of his apparel and manner. But the Prince Albert coat and even the black broadcloth suit have largely disappeared. What kind of dress is considered appropriate for the pastor? Two complementary questions were included: "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he enjoys wearing flashy or sporty clothes outside of the pulpit?" and "How acceptable . . . if he wears only somber-appearing clothes outside of the pulpit?" Parishioners are not eager to have their preacher wear showy apparel. The adults react more unfavorably (lay

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leaders, —4.5; women, —4.4) than do the youth (—2.4). A woman from Kansas remarked: "If the minister is acceptable in other ways, his judgment



is likely to be good about his clothes. We like our ministers to have individuality if they do not flaunt it."

In response to the second question, Should he wear "somber-appearing clothes?" all groups show remarkable unanimity: lay leaders, —1.3; women, —0.5; and youth, —0.7. Methodist men and women certainly have no fondness for the old-time conventional black ministerial garb for street wear. Only one in ten favored somber clothes for the pastor, while six in ten indicated indifference.

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The net result appears to be that extremes in clothing should be avoided. As a woman from the east expressed it, "He ought to be a good dresser," probably meaning that he ought to appear well-dressed but should look like neither a fashion model nor an undertaker's assistant.

### Reverse Collar

Here and there Methodist ministers are beginning to manifest greater interest in the use of traditional ecclesiastical habiliments. The laymen were asked what they thought about a specific example of this, namely, the ministerial use of the reverse or clerical collar for street wear. The response was one of mild disapproval (-2.6). Only 2 per cent favored this garb, while 46 per cent evidenced dislike of it. The rest were neutral. There is no regional difference in the reactions to this question.<sup>1</sup>

One of the few women who approved the use of a clerical collar remarked: "It is a fine thing. A minister could be more at ease. Clothes can proclaim his profession justifiably." Another feminine member of the minority made her point with humor:

<sup>1</sup> It will be recalled that Methodists do not object to the minister's use of a pulpit gown when conducting the worship service. The score was 0.0, indicating a complete balance of opinion, with the majority showing no preference.

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The clerical collar would be a great comfort, I think, to a minister. He could be more at ease and more respected by the laymen.

So many ministers don't look like anything in particular—not hard enough for businessmen, not unworldly-looking enough for professors, not sharp enough for lawyers, not glamorous enough for actors.

I hope the Methodist clergy will go back to clerical collars and sound scholarship.

A man, speaking for the majority, remarked succinctly, "Let his life show [that he is a minister], not his collar on backwards."

In spite of his best efforts, there are certain aspects of his personal appearance—for example, stature or physiognomy—which a man cannot improve upon, much as he might desire to do so. Christian people in the community will, however, as they come to know him, overlook such peculiarities of appearance as he cannot alter. Even a physical handicap may by a Christian character be turned into an asset. Far different are unpleasant personal habits which constitute barriers in the relationship of the minister with his parishioners. How strongly do the laymen object to some of these habits?

### Bad Breath

One of the most troublesome traits to which reference is rarely made by "even a person's best

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friend" is bad breath or unpleasant body odor. Though either could be the result of an unfortunate pathological condition, generally the person can by improved diet, dental care, or careful personal hygiene—including more frequent changing of clothes and dry cleaning of suits—remove the offense. It is embarrassing for a layman to have to back up steadily before an advancing minister in order to avoid the unpleasant assault of stale perspiration odor or a garlic breath. The high negative score of —7.3 shows that the laity think that "this is inexcusable in any minister." One out of two regarded persistent carelessness in these matters as enough to disqualify a man for the ministry, and 97 per cent expressed distaste for such a pastor.

### Use of Tobacco

A long-established rule in the Methodist Episcopal Church, now effective in the united Methodist Church, requires ministers to agree "to abstain wholly from the use of tobacco." Smoking has, within the past two decades, become almost a national habit. In an effort to discover how lay people feel about a minister's use of the weed, they were asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he uses tobacco?" The composite score of —5.5 indicates strong disapproval

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throughout the church. Seventy-five per cent stated it was an undesirable trait. The adult scores



were  $-5.5$  and  $-5.8$ ; both youth groups registered  $-4.6$ .

Some regional differences were recorded, yet these were less significant than might have been expected. The most forceful opposition was found in the north central states ( $-7.3$ ) while the least objection was, naturally enough, in the southeast or tobacco-growing area. Even here, however, there was unmistakable dislike of the practice on the part of all groups sampled, the average score being  $-3.4$ .

There are several reasons for this evident and wide-spread disapproval. Some object because the use of tobacco is contrary to established rules for Methodist ministers. To others it is an unpleasant and unaesthetic practice and is classified with gum chewing in public. For some, especially when they are ill, a typical "tobacco breath" is offensive and can interfere with effective pastoral calling.

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Therefore, as one layman expressed it, a minister had "better let it alone."

### Punctuality

Ministers frequently joke among themselves about the difficulty of starting meetings on time. "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he is not punctual in meeting his engagements?" Here there is no sectional or age difference in the response of Methodist men and women. With almost complete unanimity they deplore this trait in a minister (-5.7). Three out of ten regard it as disqualifying a man, while an additional six out of ten consider it a definite handicap.

### Laxity in Financial Matters

More serious in the laymen's thinking is carelessness in financial matters. Fortunately only a few ministers are guilty of this offense. However, many of them are unskilled in handling money, so that almost every church has had experience with some pastor who could not "make ends meet." When a man moves away leaving bills unpaid, the stigma handicaps his successors and the church for decades. Laymen were asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he is lax in meeting his financial obligations?" Three

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out of four regarded this habit as sufficiently serious to disqualify a man for the ministry.

A mail carrier in a midwest state urged:

They [ministers] should be taught the value of money and its proper use, namely, keeping current bills paid. Many preachers use some of their time to do a lot of unnecessary driving. Cars are very comfortable to ride in and a pleasure to drive, of course. They do not know and will not believe the amount of their income that goes into the car. A strict budget would cure a lot of that and leave a much better feeling among the church people.

### Losing Temper

No one expects a minister to be a saint at all times. He, like everyone else, will occasionally find it difficult to preserve a spirit of equanimity and patience in the face of trying circumstances. Nevertheless, he is the spiritual leader of the people, and if he acquires a reputation for irascibility, he will be handicapped in the eyes of his parishioners. When asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he occasionally loses control of his temper?" 96 per cent of the laymen said, by checking column 4 or 5, they did not want such a man (-6.5). Many added qualifying notations such as, "It depends on the circumstances." A number stated that occasional lapses in this regard would not disqualify, but would seriously disad-

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vantage, a man. One woman added facetiously that in some situations "it was a good idea," but on the whole the laymen of the Methodist Church regard loss of temper as almost inexcusable on the part of mature religious leaders. It is interesting to compare this score with the answers to two other questions referred to earlier: "How acceptable will a minister be . . . if he is undemocratic in the conducting of church affairs?" (-7.1) and "How acceptable . . . if he is intolerant of people who disagree with him?" (-7.4).

### The Minister's Family

The family of no other man in the community is subject to so much scrutiny as is that of the minister. This is not only because he is a public figure, but also because much of his message has to do with the way in which people should get along together as children of God. Just as the minister himself should be one of the best illustrations for the validity of his own teaching, so he and his family in their mutual relationships should exemplify Christian love, understanding, and forbearance. Parishioners expect to see these attitudes in the wife of the pastor and sometimes, unfairly, look for a poise and maturity in his children which they would never demand of their own.

As an approach to a discovery of the laymen's

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ideas about the minister's family, they were asked, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he has a large family?" The response of each of the groups consulted fell neatly down the middle column, with a resultant score of 0.0. Eight out of ten of the laymen in the Methodist Church do not regard it as important one way or the other whether the minister has a large family, and the rest balanced, some regarding it as desirable, others as undesirable.

Do church people expect their minister to maintain for his own children standards higher than those generally prevailing in the community? Indirect light was thrown on this interesting subject by asking laymen what their attitude is toward a minister who "permits his children to dance." This takes into account the traditional and still wide-spread opposition of Methodists to social dancing, at least in theory, even though their own children may engage in it.

Lay leaders and women emerged with exactly the same score, —3.0. Southern Methodists were more inclined to condemn pastors who permitted their children to dance than were those of the North. Least opposition came from the northeastern states.

The young men and women who were consulted viewed the matter quite differently. Nei-

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ther group, taking the nation as a whole, registered any appreciable criticism of such paternal tolerance on the part of a minister. Their combined score was —0.5. However, the youth of the North approved (+1.0), while those of the South disapproved (—2.0), particularly those living in the rural communities.

The picture as a whole indicates that children in ministers' families are not subject to as close and discriminatory social control as were their predecessors a generation ago. A number of laymen tempered their criticism: "I would not object to social functions in the school. However, I would be opposed to the public and '400' class of dances [for the pastor's children]." "With proper supervision" and "not at public dances" were stipulations added by others. A rural southern housewife wrote at more length:

I feel that, if the preacher's children wish to dance, that is their privilege. I don't think that they should go to dance halls; but if they wish to dance in their home, that is all right. As far as dancing is concerned I see no harm in it, if it is done right and in the right places. I don't dance myself, and I feel that it is what goes with dancing that makes it harmful.

Regardless of a man's other qualifications, lack of accord between him and his wife will seriously jeopardize his success in his work. Intimately in-

volved is her attitude toward her husband's profession, which—it cannot be denied—does make many demands on the mistress of the parsonage. More than one preacher, well-trained and capable, has had to give up his profession because his wife's interests and skills were not consonant with these requirements. If she is unsympathetic with his choice of vocation, if she has little appreciation for the role of religion in life, or if she does not enjoy the parish associations, it will be exceedingly difficult for him to be effective.

Certainly of equal importance is the personal relationship between the pastor and his wife. How does he act in the informal associations of the home? Is there a mature affection, devotion, and basic respect between them? Is there humility of spirit and understanding? In order to gauge the significance, in the minds of laymen, of the absence of such traits, a question covering these items negatively was included: "How acceptable will a minister be . . . if he and his wife do not get along well?" Laymen do not like such a family pattern. The minister may regard his home as his castle; but, rightly or wrongly, parishioners feel that they have a certain vested interest in the parsonage marital relationship. Two out of three regard continuing domestic tension as serious enough to disqualify a man as pastor. The com-

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posite score was —8.0. There is no regional difference on so basic a matter.

A related question, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church if he is divorced from his wife"? drew forth criticism almost as sharp (—7.1). Although lay people do not wish to be served by a man who is divorced from his wife, they regard this as slightly less objectionable than to have as their pastor a man who is still attached to an uncongenial spouse.

## A Woman as a Minister

From time to time the question has been raised, Should women be admitted to the ministry of the Methodist Church? As is generally known, a woman may, if she is properly qualified, receive a license to preach and be ordained first as deacon and later as elder. She may also be appointed to serve as the supply pastor of a church for a year at a time. She cannot, however, become a member of an annual conference and therefore be entitled to regular appointment as pastor.

In reply to a question on this subject, 72 out of 100 stated that they would object to having a woman as a minister. Even the youth, who were more tolerant of the idea than the lay leaders or women, voted two to one against having a woman as their pastor.

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In some ways the response to this question (-5.2) is paralleled by the one concerning a pastor of a different race (-4.2). Theoretically, the matter of race should not enter into consideration in the selection of a minister; practically, it does. Theoretically, the sex factor should not cause differentiation; in practice, the lay people of the Methodist Church are unwilling to overlook it. In the one situation, as in the other, established customs within the society inevitably influence the reception given a person who is of a race or sex different from that traditionally associated with the position.

In principle I would not deny the right of women to be ordained, but in practice I strongly prefer a man.

It is a matter of indifference to me but our church would decidedly prefer a man.

The world being as it is, people would rather have a poor man than a good woman. Women in the church would resent a good-looking one. Men would not want her too homely.

In each case—having a woman or a member of another race as pastor—if the lay people had been confronted with the concrete issue in their own local church, instead of being faced with a theoretical question, the opposition would certainly have been even stronger. American culture may change

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in this respect. But until it does, the ministry will probably continue to be, as it has been in the past, almost exclusively a masculine profession.<sup>2</sup>

The picture, presented in this chapter, of the minister's personal traits as distinguished from his professional is not complete. But the responses to these selected questions give a helpful portrayal of the type of preacher who wins the loyalty and support of his laymen. He is not only a man dedicated to his work, convinced and convincing. He is also an agreeable companion, the sort of person you enjoy meeting on the street. He is neatly, but not ostentatiously, attired. He observes the social amenities, is friendly and approachable, dependable in personal and financial matters. His home is characterized by affection, harmony, and good fellowship.

<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless it should be noted that women occupy many positions of importance within the church, not only in a volunteer but in a professional capacity. Several score are serving acceptably as full-time pastors of small churches for which no trained men are available. Hundreds are directors of religious education, pastor's assistants, or deaconesses in local churches, social workers, program directors in institutional churches and settlement houses. Others write literature for the church school or serve on general, jurisdictional, and annual conference boards.



## CHAPTER IX

### *The Minister the Laymen Want*

MINISTERS are not like queen bees, set aside before birth and fed with a special ambrosial honey so that they will automatically be qualified to perform a foreordained task. They are born and reared, most of them, in the homes of conscientious laymen who love the church and by their teaching and example instill in their young people a desire to live significantly and unselfishly.

#### **Selection of the Minister**

The boys who will become Protestant ministers attend the public schools and later a college or

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university along with other boys. Usually they do not decide until their junior or senior year to embark on religious work. Many a man who during college has dimly heard the call of the pastorate does not respond until, after years in business or teaching, that call becomes irresistible. The point of importance is that *these young men are all laymen before they become ministers.* Their decision to enter religious work is influenced by the lives of laymen. Further, a group of men and women in the local church must, after deliberation, vote to grant the young candidate a "license to preach" before he can take his first step toward entering the ministry.

It is proper for laymen to recognize their share of responsibility in the selection of ministers. Also, as they sit and listen, sometimes critically, to the preacher on Sunday morning, let them recall that he, like them, is human and therefore fallible and in need of the continuing grace of God and the sympathetic understanding of his fellows.

Plain it is from the preceding chapters that laymen have an exalted idea of the ministry and a clear conception of the qualities which they would like to find in their pastor. A Texan summarized as follows:

In my personal opinion a preacher should try to use the Bible in preaching; try to keep out of the ruts and

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keep improving himself; do his best for the young people; keep the old pets in good humor; be cheerful, optimistic; tell the truth; mix with the whole town; enter civic endeavors; pay his debts; be a good student of human nature; regard the church as holy ground; have spiritual services; know his members; and use his judgment in visiting.

More briefly a Memphis professor wrote: "I want my pastor to be a good, live, wide-awake, studying preacher. I want his character above reproach. I won't 'fall out' with him if he doesn't visit me, but it makes me happy to have him."

These counsels of perfection—and there were numerous others in similar vein—even though voiced with humor and understanding, account in part for the notion held by many a Christian young man that he ought not enter the ministry, since he is not "good enough." Certainly it requires courage and perhaps a measure of temerity to enter a profession where the standards are so exalted and multifarious that no one can hope to qualify fully. As one layman wrote: "After all, being a preacher is about like being a member of a draft board. He can do his best and be nearly perfect, but he'll get criticized."

### Training of the Minister

The professional training for the ministry is conducted in the theological schools of the church,

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where a three-year course of graduate study is offered. The preacher-to-be arrives at the seminary—usually from twenty-two to twenty-five years of age—with his personality already largely formed and his attitudes toward life and work, toward people and God, largely set. If he did not learn to speak correct English in his home or during his high-school or college course, he will have great difficulty acquiring that important and highly intricate art in his middle twenties. If he has come from a home where neatness and cleanliness were strangers, he cannot suddenly be transformed into an orderly, tidy person. If he is opinionated or arrogant, these traits unfortunately will not disappear simply because he studies the Bible or attends lectures on homiletics. Laymen in their homes and through their licensing of young men to preach stand at the gateway of the ministry as potentially effective guardians of the quality of the profession.

Sixty-seven per cent of those participating in the study stated that lack of seminary training is a definite handicap in a minister, while only 15 per cent expressed a preference for a non-seminary man. Men and women of the Methodist Church wish their pastor to be well trained. They are convinced that his efficiency will be increased by a thorough course of study in the history and con-

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tent of the Christian faith and in the methods and skills of preaching, church administration, religious education, and counseling. "We believe seminary training should be had wherever possible, but we realize it often is most difficult to obtain."

Several laymen included suggestions concerning the seminary course. The young men should be trained in manners and the proprieties. They need to be informed concerning the intricacies of church finance, the techniques of money raising, and record keeping. They should know how to judge architectural plans, build a church, and use simple tools for the making of repairs about the building.

It is even more important that they have an intelligent understanding of present-day economic and political problems. If they lack this, the laymen beg that they refrain from pontificating on such questions in the pulpit. Ministerial candidates should also have an acquaintance with the social sciences and the problems of the family and the home.

I feel that the ministers being graduated from the seminaries today show too little evidence of a good thorough knowledge or understanding of human relations. . . . This is more to be desired than a head full of technical theology. What good does it do if a young man is full of

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his subject if he cannot get people into his church to listen to him?

Laymen like their minister to be informed about the institutions, resources, and distinctive problems of community life. Four out of five of them objected to a minister who "has had no specialized training to acquaint him with the distinctive problems in . . . church and community."

However many suggestions the laymen have concerning the training of ministers, they are agreed that the main object of his course of study is to understand the meaning of the Christian message for all of life and to acquire the necessary skills for presenting it effectively, so that men, women, and youth will be persuaded to accept it for themselves.

### The Laymen's Portrait of a Minister

From the Atlantic to the Pacific, Methodist laymen graciously gave of their time to report their observations, hopes, and expectations concerning the Christian ministry. This was, in the main, done on a question-by-question basis. A number of them took pains to portray in more detail the type of man who could, they thought, make the gospel most vital in their community. An effective summary of desired ministerial traits is presented by a bank cashier from Virginia:

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Our minister should be tolerant, thoroughly sincere, *never* apologetic for his "calling," not given to argument, trying to live what he preaches, evangelistic but not sensational or given to emotionalism.

I do not think the minister should try to entertain, amuse, or amaze. He should inspire his congregation to lead better lives every day of the week, not just on Sunday; relate their religion to their daily lives and daily problems; offer them spiritual comfort when trouble comes; and help them see their proper relationship to God, their fellowmen of all races, their local community, and their church.<sup>1</sup>

Most important in the thinking of Christian laymen is the character of the man. Though holding up an exalted standard for the ministry, they

<sup>1</sup> Other "portraits" drawn by laymen:

We expect our ministers to be living examples—portraying the Master's way of life in our midst. A tremendous task.

I just want a well-trained, hard-working, sensible man who will come in, be a part of the community, and lead the church. I don't care how he does this—just so he works at the job and has a co-operative attitude. I don't expect a superman, either in intelligence or in the things he accomplishes. He should be a qualified, enthusiastic leader.

I want my minister to have a well-rounded knowledge of the natural sciences and, particularly, of the humanities. I want him to be tolerant of man's mistakes and to believe that it is never too late for man to begin to develop his better qualities. . . .

I want him to have a background of knowledge upon which to build his ideas of right, and the courage of his convictions. But he should not expect every other man to agree with him.

My minister must have a high degree of intelligence, be sympathetic, kind, tolerant, and energetic.

We need a crusade for stronger people in the ministry and the teaching professions.

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are ever ready to overlook minor shortcomings if they are convinced that their pastor is sincere and fearless in his presentation of the Christian gospel. A preacher who loves his people, forgets himself in their service, and uses his time constructively for their welfare will find a warm response and an eager following not only among the members of his church but in the whole of his parish. "It is my opinion that the two things which make a pastor successful in this small town are friendliness and the ability to preach without hesitancy, in such a way and tone that people believe he is sincere."

The minister laymen desire is gracious, gentle but not effeminate, and approachable. He is a pleasant companion at social affairs or on a hike through the woods. He is an enjoyable conversationalist and in his turn a good listener, refraining from thrusting to the fore his own personality and his private problems. His home and domestic relations should constitute a source of strength for him and exemplify the standards of the Christian family.

There are other attributes which people hope to find in their minister. Methodists are evangelical and missionary in outlook and believe that the Christian Church should be dynamic in message and program. They wish their pastor not only

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to encourage those in the household of faith and to train their children for church membership, but also to bring into the fellowship an ever-widening circle of men and women, who are at present unreached.

Naturally they hope that their minister will also be an effective preacher. It is a matter of pride with them if others in the community find inspiration in his sermons. They wish the Sunday-morning service to be dignified and worshipful, unmarred by ministerial mannerisms or ineptitude. They know full well that only if the minister spends time in study and in prayer can he bring a message which will help them personally as they face the problems of a perplexing world.

As pastor and counselor the minister can make some of his most fundamental contributions to his people. This requires an emotional maturity on his part, freedom from hesitancy, bashfulness, and similar adolescent traits. On the other hand, he should be neither brash nor too aggressive. A good counselor is able to listen sympathetically, helping his parishioner achieve a workable solution for his own problem without thrusting a ready-made answer upon him. The ideal minister is at home with people of all ages. Neither racial nor class difference constitutes a barrier for him.

Laymen would in general appreciate a little

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more weekday attention from their spiritual adviser. Calling is not outmoded. Men of the church indicate they would welcome a pastoral visit at their place of business. They want a preacher who is sensitive but unafraid; a man who, because of the importance of his message and the maturity of his character, is a dominant, cheerful, and convincing personality.

The laity—and this is especially true of the women—believe that their pastor should give more time to men and, to an even greater degree, to youth. The community and the home cannot be saved through a ministry to women and children alone.

### Differences Among Laymen

Concerning most ministerial traits Methodist laymen are in general accord. When, however, social issues are raised, difference of opinion is revealed. Some laymen urge their pastor to confine his sermons to an exegesis of biblical passages or to historical religion; others wish him to apply the gospel message to contemporary problems.

Conservative laymen have some justification for their complaint that preachers often discuss subjects on which they are ill-informed. A minister who presumes to have the final detailed answers concerning labor-management relationships is

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certain to be unpopular with business or industrial leaders. A typical reaction was expressed by a midwesterner, speaking of the omniscient young preacher:

Many laymen have told me how they would enjoy going to church for worship, but when someone tells them how to run their business, how badly business men are treating labor, etc., and this by someone who has never had any experience in business . . . they would rather stay home on Sunday.

Ministers, like laymen, sometimes yield to the temptation to be dogmatic, to claim the whole area of knowledge as their province, even before they have surveyed the land. This trait is deplorable but human, and laymen instead of being irritated could properly talk over his limitations with their pastor.

In addition to this, it is necessary to add that the Christian message is for all of life. As Harry Emerson Fosdick expressed it, "Christianity denies its own nature when it keeps its hands off any situation which cripples personality." While ministers will often be in error in some of their judgments concerning specific application of the principles of the Christian gospel, they dare not cease from their effort to make religion effective in every phase of human relationship. With this

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statement the majority of laymen seem to be in accord. An Idahoan spoke for many when he wrote: "Personally I fear the church has followed rather than led in a rapidly changing order."

In facing lay differences and in seeking to apply the teachings of the Master as he must, the minister needs not only courage but also sincere humility. "Preachers are only human," appropriately remarked a New Yorker, "and the best of them will fail if they lose hold of God."

### The Minister's Opportunity

It is an awesome responsibility which rests upon the heart and mind of a minister when he seeks to present the way of the Lord to his people. No course of training can ever be fully adequate; no dedication of life ever too complete. With the possible exception of the doctor, no one else in the community has such an intimate entree to the inmost lives of people. He talks with them when life crises arise. Their confidence and trust in him is essentially a giving of hostages to him. Just as no one else can be so helpful in times of strain and suffering, so no one else, by callousness, gossip, or sheer stupidity, can do them such hurt. Therefore the minister must devote time and thought to the practice of self-criticism. Because

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of this weight of responsibility, he, more than others in the community, must pray for humility and for guidance.

The place which a worthy minister may hold in the lives of his people is seen in a letter written by a gracious Tennessean who characterized herself as an "old lady."

We have just had four years of a young married man who is going to "go far." We have had one year—hope to have three more—of one who has come a "long distance" and has begun the trek homeward, not in any way but age. He has left large city churches and come to us. Educated—not over one's head—pleasant, charming in manner, rich in humor, he has seen and visited everyone on "right and wrong side of tracks." We have a two-year college here; he knows them all in the school, and the boys and girls love him.

He has had deep sorrow, but it has not embittered him. His services are dignified, not too formal; his humor contagious; his attire in perfect keeping with his profession; his handshake a "bravo" in sorrow, a heart-warming to one discouraged, and strength to the weak. In the vernacular of the street, both of these men are "tops."

## *Postscript*

EFFECTIVENESS in the ministry is made up of the interweaving of the *warp* of the minister's personality, training, experience, and family life with the *woof* of the church he is serving—its people, their friendliness, their wise counsel, their patience, and their little perversities. This study has been primarily concerned with the warp. However, there are many factors affecting a man's ministry over which he has only indirect, if any, influence: the kind of supervisory officers under whose direction he works—the superintendent and the bishop; the lay leadership in the local church—its skills, sacrificial devotion, and perhaps vested interests; the status which is accorded the ministry in the community—the result of the work of the previous pastors; and the place of religion and the tradition of the pastorate in the lives of members and constituency. To an analysis of these threads which make up the woof other studies will be directed. Perhaps it would prove helpful to ask ministers: "Under what conditions can you work most effectively?" and "What traits do you find in the ideal layman?"



## *Appendix*

The questions used in this study of the attitudes of laymen toward the minister are listed below, together with certain summary scores. For convenience they are shown in the sequence in which they are discussed in the preceding chapters, not in the order of the original questionnaire.

Each question depends on the introductory query, "How acceptable will a minister be in your church . . ." Laymen participating in the study were offered a choice of five columns in which to indicate their attitude concerning a minister who had, or did not have, the given characteristic. The meaning of each column, together with the rating value which was assigned to an answer in each, is also indicated below:

COLUMN	MEANING OF COLUMN	VALUE
1	"We very much desire this in our minister"	10
2	"Desirable but not necessary"	5
3	"Not important one way or the other"	0
4	"Undesirable but would not disqualify"	- 5
5	"This would disqualify"	-10

The use of this rating device makes possible a composite score. If, on the basis of all of the responses, a question has a final rating at zero, or slightly above or below, it may indicate that concerning this trait the lay people are relatively indifferent. Or it may be the result of a balance between favorable and unfavorable responses.

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The higher the plus score, the more important is the trait in the thinking of the lay people. Conversely, minus scores register opposition or dissatisfaction, which may be deemed inconsequential if the score is low but which takes on serious significance as the score approaches -4 or -5.

The last four columns show the average score for each of the four groups sampled in the study: the district and associate district lay leaders, over ninety per cent of whom are men; women above the age of twenty-five; youth between fifteen and twenty-five; and the members of the Methodist Youth Council. The responses of these four separate groups are on many questions very similar; in other cases differences in age-group interests or the results of special-study courses—as in the Woman's Society for Christian Service—may be reflected.

The first three columns cover all of the replies from the four groups. Instead of using the scoring device referred to above, percentages are used. The first column shows the proportion of those who stated that they desired a particular trait in their minister (responses in columns 1 and 2 of the questionnaire); the second column reports those who indicated indifference (responses in column 3 of the questionnaire); the third shows the proportion who regard the trait as undesirable (responses in columns 4 and 5 of the questionnaire).

## APPENDIX

Table A

**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION AND GROUP SCORE  
ON ATTITUDES OF LAYMEN TOWARD VARIOUS  
TRAITS IN MINISTERS**

HOW ACCEPTABLE WILL A MINISTER BE IN YOUR CHURCH:	Percentage Distribution All Replies			Average Score			
	Favor- able or "Yes"	In- dif- fer- ent	Un- favor- able or "No"	Lay Lead- ers	Wom- en	Youth (15- 25)	M.Y.C. Mem- bers
<b>Chapter II</b>							
if he is apologetic for being a minister?.....	1.0	1.4	97.6	-8.6	-9.0	-8.5	-9.0
if in his preaching he seems pessimistic and defeatist concerning the achievement of the goals of the Christian church?.....	1.3	0.7	98.0	-8.1	-9.1	-8.3	-8.8
if he is not effective in winning decisions for Christ?.....	10.5*	1.4	88.1	-5.4	-7.1	-6.9	-6.5

\* In a number of instances in this table the results may at first sight appear incorrect. For example, in the question, ". . . if he is not effective in winning decisions for Christ?" the average church member might regard the favorable response of 10.5 per cent as incomprehensible. However, most persons who are represented in this group undoubtedly meant exactly what they said, because many of them interpreted the question as implying an emotional evangelism which they disapproved. Another illustration of the point: Several indicated that it is "occasionally a good idea" for a minister to lose his temper.

In a few cases, undoubtedly, there was carelessness in reading and marking some questions. Where a questionnaire gave repeated evidence of a failure to comprehend (as, for instance, marking in favor of both holding and not holding evangelistic meetings), the questionnaire was thrown out. Otherwise it was used in its entirety in spite of an occasional aberration.

THE LAYMAN LOOKS AT THE MINISTER

Table A (Continued)

**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION AND GROUP SCORE  
ON ATTITUDES OF LAYMEN TOWARD VARIOUS  
TRAITS IN MINISTERS**

HOW ACCEPTABLE WILL A MINISTER BE IN YOUR CHURCH:	Percentage Distribution All Replies			Average Score			
	Favor- able or "Yes"	In- dif- fer- ent	Un- favor- able or "No"	Lay Lead- ers	Wom- en	Youth (15- 25)	M.Y.C. Mem- bers
if he fails to train classes for church membership?.....	9.9	2.5	87.6	-4.4	-7.2	-5.8	-6.0
if he does <b>not</b> hold evan- geliestic meetings?.....	8.9	24.7	66.4	-3.9	-4.3	-3.4	-1.9
if he does hold evan- geliestic meetings?.....	72.1	22.0	5.9	5.8	6.0	4.6	3.2
if he hesitates to take the initiative on Christian issues?.....	6.3	1.9	91.8	-6.4	-7.5	-6.7	-7.4
if he fails to spend ade- quate time in study?....	6.7	3.1	90.2	-6.1	-6.9	-7.1	-6.8
if he spends a large part of his time doing repair work on the church buildings and caring for the grounds?.....	16.0	24.9	59.1	-3.0	-3.0	-1.2	-0.2
if he takes part-time jobs on the side for pay?.....	0.8	10.0	89.2	-7.2	-7.6	-5.7	-6.2
if his wife works for pay in the community?.....	0.7	27.9	71.4	-4.8	-5.2	-3.3	-3.1
Chapter III							
if he devotes the major portion of his time to preparing sermons?.....	60.0	9.6	30.4	2.5	3.8	1.2	-0.2
* if he does not "preach from the Bible"?.....	6.6	12.2	81.2	-6.2	-7.3	-4.9	-3.3
if he holds theological views which are in dis- agreement with those of the people in the church?.....	2.8	20.9	76.3	-5.1	-5.3	-4.1	-3.7

## APPENDIX

Table A (Continued)

**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION AND GROUP SCORE  
ON ATTITUDES OF LAYMEN TOWARD VARIOUS  
TRAITS IN MINISTERS**

HOW ACCEPTABLE WILL A MINISTER BE IN YOUR CHURCH:	Percentage Distribution All Replies			Average Score			
	Favor- able or "Yes"	In- dif- fer- ent	Un- favor- able or "No"	Lay Lead- ers	Wom- en	Youth (15- 25)	M.Y.C. Mem- bers
If he uses sensational or bizarre subjects in announcing sermons?.....	3.9	17.4	78.7	-4.6	-5.9	-3.2	-3.1
If he does not start services punctually?.....	7.5	2.2	90.3	-4.8	-5.8	-5.1	-4.8
If he makes frequent changes in the order of worship?.....	8.5	39.0	52.5	-2.5	-2.5	-1.0	-1.0
If he stresses the use of ritual in the worship service?.....	46.0	37.3	16.7	1.9	2.5	2.3	2.0
If he wears a pulpit gown when preaching?.....	18.2	61.6	20.2	-0.5	0.1	0.4	1.0
If he lacks dignity in performing ministerial functions, such as conducting the communion service or receiving members into the church?.....	3.7	1.1	95.2	-6.2	-7.0	-7.0	-7.1
If he has an annoying pulpit mannerism?.....	0.3	2.1	97.6	-6.1	-6.2	-5.8	-4.9
If he does not speak distinctly?.....	2.5	0.7	96.8	-6.1	-7.0	-6.3	-5.9
If he makes mistakes in grammar?.....	1.3	4.8	93.9	-5.1	-5.8	-5.3	-4.9
<b>Chapter IV</b>							
If he is unable to counsel people who have problems in their personal adjustment?.....	10.2	2.5	87.3	-5.4	-5.7	-6.6	-7.1

**THE LAYMAN LOOKS AT THE MINISTER**

**Table A (Continued)**

**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION AND GROUP SCORE  
ON ATTITUDES OF LAYMEN TOWARD VARIOUS  
TRAITS IN MINISTERS**

HOW ACCEPTABLE WILL A MINISTER BE IN YOUR CHURCH:	Percentage Distribution All Replies			Average Score			
	Favor- able or "Yes"	In- dif- fer- ent	Un- favor- able or "No"	Lay Lead- ers	Wom- en	Youth (15- 25)	M.Y.C. Mem- bers
if he is hesitant and bashful in meeting people?....	1.3	1.5	97.2	-6.6	-6.8	-7.3	-8.2
if he makes few calls on his members?.....	9.5	4.2	86.3	-4.8	-4.3	-5.9	-5.3
if he seldom prays during pastoral calls?.....	25.6	17.5	56.9	-1.8	-1.5	-2.0	-2.0
if he calls on his laymen at their places of business?	55.6	29.5	14.9	4.8	3.5	1.6	0.8
if he spends the major portion of his time and interest in the young people's program?.....	71.3	7.3	21.4	3.6	4.6	5.2	3.3
if he directs church and community recreation?..	82.8	11.9	5.3	5.7	5.0	6.0	6.0
if he allows folk games in the church basement or social hall?.....	54.2	31.7	14.1	3.1	2.7	5.4	6.6
if he permits social dancing in the church basement or social hall?.....	14.3	15.6	70.1	-4.7	-5.7	-1.9	-0.9
Chapter V							
if he serves women and children well, but does not furnish challenging leadership for men?....	3.3	1.9	94.8	-5.5	-7.2	-7.3	-7.0
if he does not develop new leadership within the church?.....	10.3	1.5	88.2	-4.8	-5.5	-6.8	-7.2
if he assents to one individual or group keeping							

## APPENDIX

Table A (Continued)

**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION AND GROUP SCORE  
ON ATTITUDES OF LAYMEN TOWARD VARIOUS  
TRAITS IN MINISTERS**

HOW ACCEPTABLE WILL A MINISTER BE IN YOUR CHURCH:	Percentage Distribution All Replies			Average Score			
	Favor- able or "Yes"	In- dif- fer- ent	Un- favor- able or "No"	Lay Lead- ers	Wom- en	Youth (15- 25)	M.Y.C. Mem- bers
the same offices and controlling the policies of the church?.....	1.6	4.5	93.9	-6.5	-6.7	-7.1	-7.1
if he feels the church-school program competes with the Sunday-morning worship service?.....	5.3	6.8	87.9	-5.9	-6.2	-5.7	-6.6
if he is intolerant of people who disagree with him?.	4.2	0.4	95.4	-6.6	-8.4	-7.1	-6.9
if he is undemocratic in the conducting of church affairs?.....	3.1	1.2	95.7	-6.9	-7.3	-7.3	-7.5
if he is unwilling to assume some leadership responsibility for the financing of the church?..	15.6	10.4	74.0	-3.1	-4.5	-4.8	-4.8
if he does not consult with the church treasurer to see that church funds are spent as budgeted?..	11.7	10.3	78.0	-3.2	-5.7	-5.7	-5.9
if he stresses loyalty to the Methodist Church and its organization?....	90.3	6.1	3.6	7.5	8.1	6.8	6.5
if he makes no effort to maintain a good relationship between the local church and the district superintendent, bishop, and the general boards of the church?...	6.5	2.6	90.9	-6.6	-8.1	-8.4	-7.7

THE LAYMAN LOOKS AT THE MINISTER

Table A (Continued)

**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION AND GROUP SCORE  
ON ATTITUDES OF LAYMEN TOWARD VARIOUS  
TRAITS IN MINISTERS**

HOW ACCEPTABLE WILL A MINISTER BE IN YOUR CHURCH:	Percentage Distribution All Replies			Average Score			
	Favor- able or "Yes"	In- dif- fer- ent	Un- favor- able or "No"	Lay Lead- ers	Wom- en	Youth (15- 25)	M.Y.C. Mem- bers
<b>Chapter VI</b>							
if he co-operates with ministers of other denominations in Thanksgiving and pre-Easter services?.....	97.8	2.1	0.1	8.9	9.1	8.6	8.9
if he refuses to try to correct unwholesome community conditions?.....	13.5	2.6	83.9	-4.6	-5.7	-8.2	-7.3
if he is a popular speaker at the Chamber of Commerce and service clubs, such as Rotary?..	62.4	33.1	4.5	5.2	3.3	3.4	4.6
if he makes occasional addresses at labor union meetings?.....	31.8	45.9	22.3	0.6	0.5	1.1	3.9
<b>Chapter VII</b>							
if he preaches against the liquor traffic?.....	95.4	3.3	1.3	7.6	9.0	8.0	7.4
if he preaches against acquisitiveness and the desire to get more and more "things"?.....	48.8	22.1	29.1	1.2	1.9	2.4	3.0
if he should encourage a young man on prison parole to attend your young people's meeting?.....	82.2	12.3	5.5	6.1	6.8	7.5	7.2
if he proclaims equal opportunities and responsibilities for all racial and nationality groups?.	90.2	4.7	5.1	7.0	8.3	8.0	8.0

## APPENDIX

Table A (Continued)

**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION AND GROUP SCORE  
ON ATTITUDES OF LAYMEN TOWARD VARIOUS  
TRAITS IN MINISTERS**

HOW ACCEPTABLE WILL A MINISTER BE IN YOUR CHURCH:	Percentage Distribution All Replies			Average Score			
	Favor- able or "Yes"	In- dif- fer- ent	Un- favor- able or "No"	Lay Lead- ers	Wom- en	Youth (15- 25)	M.Y.C. Mem- bers
if he is outspoken against the Jews as a class?.....	1.9	2.4	95.7	-7.6	-8.6	-8.1	-8.1
if he is thoroughly qualified and can speak English well but is of a different race from the majority of the congregation (as Indian, Filipino, or Chinese-American serving a white or Negro congregation)?....	3.7	31.7	64.6	-5.0	-4.3	-2.5	-1.8
if he pressures the people in order to meet the apportionment for World Service?.....	38.9	9.4	51.7	0.1	0.7	-1.1	-1.1
if he "soft pedals" World Service (missionary) giving, in order to boost the local church budget? Chapter VIII	1.7	3.5	94.8	-5.7	-7.4	-6.3	-5.6
if he is greatly overweight?.....	0.7	47.0	52.3	-3.3	-3.3	-1.1	-1.4
if he is untidy in his personal appearance?.....	1.4	0.6	98.0	-7.0	-8.1	-7.3	-6.9
if he enjoys wearing flashy or sporty clothes outside of the pulpit?.....	0.3	34.6	65.1	-4.5	-4.4	-2.6	-2.2
if he wears only somber-appearing clothes outside of the pulpit?.....	12.5	55.7	31.8	-1.3	-0.5	-0.5	-0.8
if he wears, on the street, a clerical (reverse) col-							

**THE LAYMAN LOOKS AT THE MINISTER**

**Table A (Continued)**

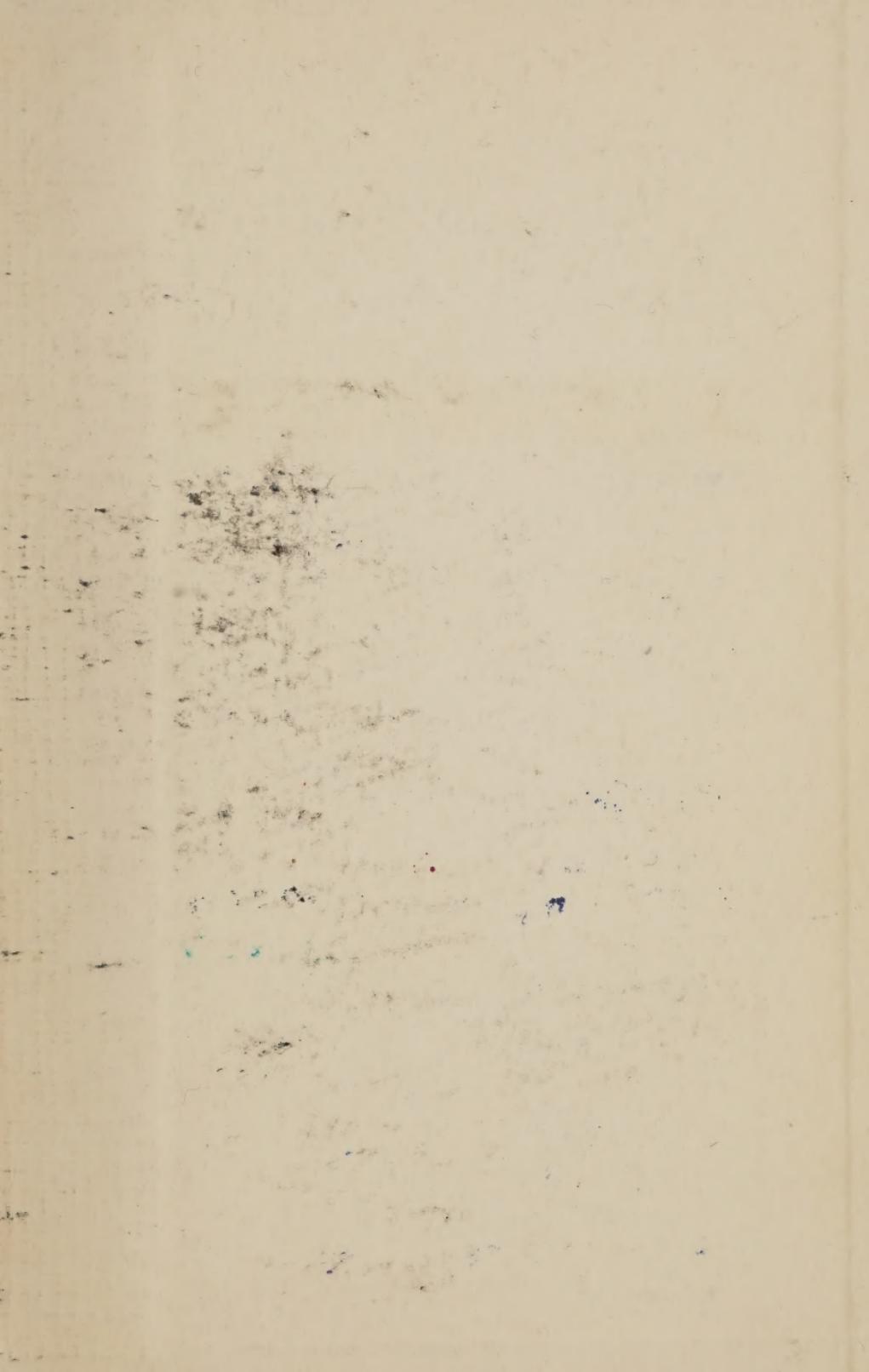
**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION AND GROUP SCORE  
ON ATTITUDES OF LAYMEN TOWARD VARIOUS  
TRAITS IN MINISTERS**

HOW ACCEPTABLE WILL A MINISTER BE IN YOUR CHURCH:	Percentage Distribution All Replies			Average Score			
	Favor- able or "Yes"	In- dif- fer- ent	Un- favor- able or "No"	Lay Lead- ers	Wom- en	Youth (15- 25)	M.Y.C. Mem- bers
lar or other clerical garb?.....	2.4	52.0	45.6	-3.4	-1.9	-2.7	-2.0
* if he has bad breath or noticeable body odor?...	0.5	2.2	97.3	-7.1	-7.5	-6.5	-6.3
if he uses tobacco?.....	1.0	23.7	75.3	-5.5	-5.8	-4.6	-4.6
if he is not punctual in meeting his engagements?.....	5.0	1.0	94.0	-5.6	-5.8	-5.8	-4.8
* if he is lax in meeting his financial obligations?...	0.3	1.0	98.7	-8.7	-9.1	-7.9	-7.3
* if he occasionally loses control of his temper?...	0.6	3.6	95.8	-6.6	-6.5	-6.5	-5.7
if he has a large family?...	7.7	83.7	8.6	-0.1	0.0	0.3	0.4
if he permits his children to dance?.....	6.8	44.6	48.6	-3.0	-3.0	-0.8	-0.2
* if he and his wife do not get along well?.....	1.1	1.6	97.3	-8.0	-8.1	-7.4	-7.2
if he is divorced from his wife?.....	0.4	7.3	92.3	-7.0	-7.6	-5.8	-6.3
if the minister is a woman?.....	1.6	26.0	72.4	-5.7	-5.0	-4.5	-4.5
Chapter IX							
if he is not a seminary graduate?.....	14.6	18.1	67.3	-2.9	-4.0	-3.1	-3.4
if he has had no specialized training to acquaint him with the distinctive problems in your church and community (as rural or urban or mission field)?.....	11.9	8.6	79.5	-4.1	-5.0	-4.2	-4.2



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